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A BOOK OF ESSAYS



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# A BOOK OF ESSAYS

BY

S. A. HIRSCH, PH.D.

JOINT-EDITOR OF *THE GREEK GRAMMAR OF ROGER BACON*  
AND A FRAGMENT OF HIS HEBREW GRAMMAR

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TO

*MY WIFE*

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

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## NOTE

*The authors of all volumes published by the  
Jewish Historical Society of England accept  
full and sole responsibility for the views  
expressed by them.*

## PREFACE

THE present volume appears simply as a Book of Essays, without any description on the title-page of the nature of their contents. I could not find a suitable adjective which would cover the characteristics of all of them. They are one and all literary in a sense; which is, however, not the technical sense. The article on Pfefferkorn is rather historical, and those on *The Jewish Philosophers of Religion*, *Some Literary Trifles*, and *Israel—a Nation*, belong to different forms of thought. Under these circumstances I have not troubled any further about a name, and the volume has to go forth adjectiveless into the world.

These essays have, with one exception, already appeared before. The essays on *Early English Hebraists*, *Pfefferkorn*, *Reuchlin*, *Jewish Philosophers of Religion*, *The Jewish Sibylline Oracles*, and *Some Literary Trifles*, were published in the *Jewish Quarterly Review* at various times, ranging over a period from 1890 till 1901. My thanks are due to Messrs. Israel Abrahams and Claude G. Montefiore, the joint-editors of that magazine, for their kind permission to reprint these essays. I must also thank Mr. L. J. Greenberg, who published the Report of the Zionist Conference in London in 1898, in which the address

entitled *Israel—a Nation* appeared, for allowing me to reprint it in this volume. The *Survey of Jewish Literature* appears here in print for the first time.

At the present time, inquiries into topics of history and literature proceed with enormous strides. The subjects dealt with in these volumes have naturally shared in the general progress. Thus *Roger Bacon's Greek Grammar and his Fragment on Hebrew Grammar* has seen the light, and the Books of the Sibylline Oracles have been subjected to further searching investigations since these essays were written, yet my views, as expressed here, have not undergone modifications to such an extent as to necessitate material alterations. The works of recent authors who have submitted these subjects to fresh inquiries are, however, mentioned in the notes under the text.

The essays were written at some distance of time, and quite independently from each other. It happened, therefore, that in some cases certain points are treated in one essay which had already been touched upon in a former. Fortunately, this has been the case in only very few instances, and then the repetitions were so slight that no serious excisions were demanded.

A few words in regard to the illustrations.

The portrait of Roger Bacon—that is to say, the picture with the letterpress under it—is reproduced from a print belonging to the British Museum.

The fac-similes of two pages of Roger Bacon's *Opus Majus* are reproductions from the remainder of the Cottonian manu-



script of that work (Julius D. V.) which was rescued from the fire. It is well known that in 1731 a fire broke out in the house in Little Dean's Yard, where the Cotton library had been deposited. Ninety-seven out of a number of nine hundred and fifty-eight volumes perished in the flames, whilst one hundred and five volumes were more or less seriously damaged. The manuscript of the *Opus Majus* had suffered severely; a great number of folios have almost entirely disappeared, others have become illegible; and the folio from which these fac-similes were taken belong to a part of the work which has suffered least.

Johann Reuchlin's portrait and the fac-simile of his signature are a reproduction of the frontispiece of Dr. Lamey's *Johann Reuchlin eine biographische Skizze*. Dr. Lamey says (p. 95) that the portrait was drawn after the oil-painting which is preserved in the University Library of Pforzheim, Reuchlin's native town. It formerly belonged to Professor Mai, Reuchlin's first biographer, and had already been made use of by Thorwaldsen for the Walhalla. The fac-simile was made from a Hebrew manuscript in the Grand Ducal Library in Karlsruhe. I may add that Dr. Lamey's frontispiece was also reproduced in the third volume of Boecking's edition of Ulrich von Hutten's works.

The fac-simile of two pages of Reuchlin's musical notation of the Hebrew accents are taken from his work, *De accentibus et orthographia linguae Hebraicae*.

Samson Raphael Hirsch's portrait was sent me by my late friend, Justizrath Dr. Naphtali Hirsch, of Frankfort-on-the-Main, the Rabbi's youngest son. To my deep regret I heard of his demise when I was on the point of thanking him in this Preface.

The two Sybils, after *Rafaël*, are reproduced from a print belonging to the British Museum.

Vondel's portrait is a reproduction of the frontispiece of *J. van Vondel's Poezy of verscheide Gedichte, &c.*, Franeker, 1602.

I cordially thank Mr. Israel Abrahams for the scrupulous care he bestowed on the reading of the proofs; and, last, though not least, I offer my thanks to my daughter, Miss S. R. Hirsch, for the excellent index she has compiled.

S. A. H.

LONDON, *February* 1904.

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## EARLY ENGLISH HEBRAISTS: ROGER BACON AND HIS PREDECESSORS

(1899)

In trying to fathom the state of learning in Western Europe during the Middle Ages, we are not so much struck by the ignorance of the masses, as by the ignorance of the learned. The occasional appearance of scholars of great breadth and depth of erudition makes the low level of the learning possessed by the mediocrities all the more conspicuous. The ordinary student moved within well-defined limits; his learning was for the most part confined to theological disquisitions, on the lines laid down by the Church, which narrowed more and more as time went on. It was always the moulding and re-moulding of the existing material in customary grooves and after approved methods. Philosophy and knowledge of nature were drawn from sources that had lost all their purity. The works of the ancients, or as much of them as was within reach, had suffered from bad translations, bad transcriptions, mutilations, interpolations, and incorrect interpretations. No new facts were evolved, no new data fixed. No wonder, therefore, that whenever a bolder spirit ventured to break through the conventional humdrum of that which was miscalled study and research, the

mediocrities rose as one man against the disturber. It took centuries to lead up to the Renaissance of letters, and when that event actually took place, when scholasticism succumbed at last, and the vigilant observation of nature commenced to supersede the *a priori* speculations of physical science, the change was accompanied by a friction and disturbance that altered the aspect of almost all European affairs.

This self-satisfied slothfulness, this vague horror of every new departure, both in regard to method and to subject-matter, affected the whole field of knowledge. The study of languages, the development of philosophical thought, and the exploration of the phenomena of nature, all suffered in equal measure. The bitterness with which the study of Greek was combated was only a degree less intense than that which opposed the investigation of the Hebrew language and lore. The latter discipline had to suffer, besides, from a certain feeling of uncanniness, a superstitious fear of the Jewish people and their language. "The crowd saw in the Jew a mysterious being, possessed of awe-inspiring mysteries. He was considered a sorcerer. The masses saw in the Hebrew volumes a museum of magic art; the grotesque Hebrew letters seemed to them cabalistical characters, and the Jew was suspected of occult arts and diabolical intercourse. This vague superstition has not yet entirely died out."<sup>1</sup> It was not before the end of the fifteenth century that the self-denial and dogged perseverance of

<sup>1</sup> Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, *Israel chez les nations*, Paris, 1893, p. 41.



Johann Reuchlin secured a firm footing for the study of Hebrew in Christian Europe; and it was long after the knowledge of that language and its literature—together with the study of the other Semitic languages which followed in its train—had made considerable headway on the Continent, that this branch of learning was seriously taken in hand in England.

Reuchlin's fame had reached England already during his lifetime. His learned intercourse with Erasmus; the admiration which he inspired in men like Thomas More and John Fisher; the eagerness with which English students, who, like Richard Croke, visited the continental seats of learning, betook themselves to Reuchlin, in order to become initiated into the newly discovered discipline; and, above all, the life-and-death struggle between Reuchlin and his enemies of Cologne, who desired the public destruction of all Hebrew books, gave an impetus to English scholars to turn their attention to the literature of Hebraism. For a long time Hebrew was taught at the universities of England in a haphazard, empirical way. There was no depth of learning, and hardly any breadth. Apart from a few scholars, who achieved great proficiency, Hebrew was only considered as a kind of ornamental accomplishment, affected by incipient theologians, who were, however, quite satisfied with the merest glimpse through the portals of the temple. It is curious to observe at how low a rate the general public estimated the actual knowledge of those who were engaged in the pursuit of these studies. This feeling is characteristically

described in the popular novel *Charles O'Malley*, by Charles Lever. The author makes one of his personages, Frank Webber, express himself, in a letter supposed to have been written by that scapegrace from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1810, in the following terms: "Belson (fortunately he was born in the nineteenth, not in the sixteenth century, or he'd be most likely ornamenting a pile of faggots) ventured upon some stray excursions into the Hebrew verbs—the Professor himself never having transgressed beyond the declensions—and the consequence is, he is in disgrace among the seniors." Allowing for some artistic exaggeration, it describes the situation correctly; underlying it is the fact that a proper, scientific treatment of Hebrew and the kindred tongues is, in this country, a product of quite recent times.

This is all the more remarkable, as it was an Englishman who fully understood the position that Hebrew ought to occupy in the curriculum of learning, and who had himself set to work to master the language, and to urge its importance upon others, fully two centuries before Reuchlin was born. Roger Bacon had already in the thirteenth century advocated the study of Hebrew; but the gigantic intellectual powers, vast erudition, inventive genius, and stolid perseverance, which he brought to bear upon this and many other subjects, were doomed to pass away, almost entirely without fruit; and his name lived in the memories of the ignorant—a large class in those days, comprising almost everybody—as that of a magician and a cultivator of the black arts.

Before Bacon's time Hebrew was as little known in England as in any portion of what was called in those days [Latinitas] the countries professing the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, and including almost the whole of Europe. No clergyman before Bacon deemed it at all necessary to know Hebrew. The bulk of them had only vague notions as to its existence; the common Latin translation of the Bible, sanctioned by the Church, was considered as sacred, and was the basis of all their theological disquisitions and discussions. Only very few English members of the clergy possessed a smattering of Hebrew; there was perhaps not a single one who had sufficient knowledge to be productive of a new idea or new point of view. Augustine can hardly be called an Englishman; he knew no Hebrew, as little as his superior, Pope Gregory the Great, to whose total ignorance of Hebrew I shall have to recur.

The Venerable Bede is the first English ecclesiastic in whose works a few stray allusions to Hebrew are met with. Prof. Steinschneider<sup>1</sup> justly says that the *Expositio Nominum*, found among Bede's works, proves, as little as any other dictionary of names, a direct knowledge of Hebrew. Hody, who published in 1705 a work entitled *De Bibliorum Textibus*, in which a rather large fragment of Roger Bacon's *Opus Minus* appeared for the first time, passes in review such English theologians as

<sup>1</sup> In H. Brody's *Zeitschrift für Hebräische Bibliographie*, I., No. 2, p. 53. The same remark applies to explanations of the Hebrew alphabet; e.g. such a one as is found in the commentary to the Lamentations of Jeremiah, in Jerome's works, but which some ascribe to Bede.

possessed, in his opinion, a knowledge of Hebrew. Hody was a great patriot in this respect, and he was in every case at pains to make as much as possible of some chance allusion in that direction, found in the works of any English divine. In the case of Bede, who lived in the eighth century, Hody quotes several passages to show the former to have been a first-rate Hebraist.<sup>1</sup> I agree with Hody that Bede knew some Hebrew, but we are not able to judge as to the extent of his knowledge. In spite of the testimony of Roger Bacon,<sup>2</sup> who alludes to Bede as "literatissimus in grammatica et linguis in originali," I do not think that his knowledge of Hebrew amounted to much. It is true, in his work *De Temporum Ratione* (ch. lxvii.), he professes to base his chronological data directly upon the "Hebrew truth." But it would be an error to conclude from this expression, with Hody, that he made use of the Hebrew text of the Bible. Bede himself explains that the "Hebrew truth" means to him nothing more than Jerome's translation. "Just as the Greek scholars," he says, "based their chronological data upon the text of the seventy translators; so we, who drink from the pure source of Hebrew truth, are enabled, through the industry of the holy Jerome, to follow it."<sup>3</sup> Most passages in his com-

<sup>1</sup> P. 406 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> *Opus Minus*, p. 332, Brewer.

<sup>3</sup> Haec de cursu praeteriti seculi ex Hebraica veritate prout potuimus elucubrare curavimus, aequum rati ut sicut Graeci LXX translatorum editione utentes de ea sibi suisque temporibus libros condidere, ita et nos qui per beati interpretis Hieronymi industriam puro Hebraicae veritatis fonte potamur, temporum quoque rationem juxta hanc scire queamus. . . .

mentaries, if not all, in which some knowledge of the Hebrew text of the Bible transpires, are taken from Jerome. Nevertheless, he must have known some Hebrew, else he would hardly have embodied in his commentaries such notes as those in which allusion is made to the equal sound of the  $\text{י}$  and  $\text{ד}$ , or to the similarity of shape between  $\text{ג}$  and  $\text{י}$ ,<sup>1</sup> or, in his preface to the Psalter, given the Hebrew title of the Book of Psalms.

Hody<sup>2</sup> mentions a remarkable passage from a commentary on the Psalms included among Jerome's works. In Psalm cxxxvi. the words "qui fecit luminaria magna" have the following note superadded: "This is said of the stars, which are large, although to us they appear small; in the same way, as if we were to ascend a high mountain and see the people below in the valley, they would appear small to us. For the same star, which is visible 'in Britannia,' appears the same everywhere." Now, the same commentary contains some direct references to the Hebrew

Caeterum cunctis in commune suademus, et sive quis ex Hebraica veritate, quae ad nos per memoratum interpretem pura pervenisse etiam hostibus Judaeis in professo est. . . . Similarly in his Apology *Ad Plegwinum*: Suadebamque illi . . . ut Scripturae sacrae per Christianum nobis interpretem translatae, potius quam Judaeis interpretationibus, vel Chronographorum imperitiae, fidem accommodare disceret.

<sup>1</sup> Thus: Genes. X. Filii Saba: Regma et Dadan. Hic Saba per Sin litteram scribitur, supra vero per Samech.—Cethim et Dodanim, Dodanim Rhodii, melius enim legitur Rodanim sive Rodim, ut septuaginta interpretes transtulerunt, et in libro Hebraeorum nominum etiam noster interpres posuit. Similitudo enim litterarum Daleth et Res hunc apud Hebraeos saepe facit errorem, ut alia legitur pro alia.

<sup>2</sup> P. 409.



text, and if the whole commentary were one compact work, we should here have another Early English Hebraist. But this is by no means the case; the commentary has, as Hody admits, all the appearance of being a compilation; and the words quoted are undoubtedly the interpolation into the text of a marginal note by some English reader.

\* Alcuin, who was born in 735, seems also to have had some knowledge of Hebrew. Himself a native of Yorkshire, he is believed to have learned Latin, Greek, and Hebrew from Egbert and Albert, Bishops of York. Alcuin exercised an enormous influence upon the spread of learning. He either founded or improved most of the schools in France. The regard Charlemagne had for this scholar was unbounded. The court, we are told, was turned into an academy, and Charlemagne and his family and courtiers became Alcuin's pupils, and affected biblical or classical names in addition to their own. Besides theological works, Alcuin left also some writings on philosophy, rhetoric, and philology. He was already an old man when Charlemagne commissioned him to procure an improved edition of the Bible. The words *Veritas Hebraica*, when used by Alcuin, have the same meaning as with Bede. Alcuin must have known some Hebrew, although his works show little trace of it. His remark on Genesis xxv. 8, that the word *deficiens* was not in the Hebrew text, but was added by the seventy interpreters, does not prove any direct knowledge of Hebrew. His note on Ecclesiastes ix. 12 would prove a knowledge of Hebrew,

provided the observation be originally his. The words בְּנֵי אָדָם are always translated *filii hominum*; and he observes that, wherever the expression *filii hominum* occurred, the Hebrew text had *filii hominis*, and that it meant the "sons of Adam." It is, he says, usual in Scripture to call the whole human race the sons of Adam.<sup>1</sup> In one of his Epistles he connects the word Malchus with its Hebrew cognate, and says it means *king*.<sup>2</sup>

Alcuin read in Jerome's translation of Ecclesiastes xii. 4 (וַיִּשְׁחוּ כָּל בָּנוֹת הַשִּׁיר, "and all the daughters of the song shall be brought low") "et obmutescent omnes filiae carminis." He observes, "obmutescere quoque, sive, *ut melius habetur in Hebraeo*, surdescere filias carminis." It is doubtful whether this observation betrays a knowledge of Hebrew. (The present text of Jerome has *obsurdescent*.) In Alcuin's description of the York library it is said that the relics of ancient Hebrew lore were found there, together with those of Roman and Greek wisdom.<sup>3</sup> It would not have been an impossible thing for Hebrew books to have found their way into that library, but, as Mr. Poole

<sup>1</sup> Notandum est quod per totum librum, ubicunque dicitur *filii hominum*, in Hebraeo habetur *filii hominis*, hoc est *filii Adam*; et omnis pene Scriptura hoc idiomate plena est, universum genus humanum Adam filios vocans.

<sup>2</sup> J. Rawson Lumley, *Greek Learning in the Western Church during the Seventh and Eighth Centuries*, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> *De Pontificibus et Sanctis Ecclesiae Eboracensis*, vv. 1535-1539:—

Illic invenies veterum vestigia Patrum,  
Quidquid habet pro se Latio Romanus in orbe,  
Graecia vel quidquid transmisit clara Latinis:  
Hebraicus vel quod populus bibit imbre superno.

justly remarks,<sup>1</sup> the words used by Alcuin need not be pressed to mean more than the source from which the literature he mentioned was derived.

Hody relates<sup>2</sup> that John Bale stated, on the authority of William of Malmesbury, that Athelstan, king of England, who flourished in the tenth century, had the Bible translated into Anglo-Saxon, from the pure Hebrew original, with the assistance of some converted Jews, but he further says that no such passage could be found in Malmesbury's works.

Stephen Harding, the famous Cistercian abbot, an Englishman by birth, who was brought up in the monastery of Sherborne, in Dorsetshire, but spent the greater part of his life in France, although himself knowing no Hebrew, yet appreciated its importance for establishing a correct text of the Old Testament. "A MS. edition of the Bible, written under the eye of our abbot himself, was preserved with great reverence at Citeaux up to the time of the French Revolution. Not content with consulting Latin MSS., he even had recourse to the Rabbins, in order to settle the readings of the Old Testament."<sup>3</sup> They explained to him in Latin the Hebrew and Chaldaean of several

<sup>1</sup> R. L. Poole, *Illustrations of the History of Mediaeval Thought*, London, 1884, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> P. 415. There is no ground to assume, with Hody (p. 403) the existence of an English Eucherius, as distinct from the bishop of Lyons of that name.

<sup>3</sup> J. H. N[ewman], *The Cistercian Saints of England*, London, 1844, p. 129.



questionable passages and verses, and he caused all such as could not be found in the original to be erased from the Latin text. The work was completed in 1109.<sup>1</sup>

I feel inclined to believe that in the twelfth century England could boast of a scholar who not only possessed a considerable knowledge of the Hebrew text of the Bible, but who also understood how to apply the same in a bold and independent spirit. As this rests on mere conjecture, I am obliged to treat the matter rather fully, in order to explain the grounds on which I base my surmise. Roger Bacon, in his *Compendium Studii Philosophiae*,<sup>2</sup> discusses the ambiguity of the Latin translation of Genesis ii. 1, 2. The Latin words may be forced to mean: "These are the generations of heaven and earth when they were created, on the day when God made heaven and earth. And all the vegetation of the field had not come forth yet," &c. Or, they may mean: "These are the generations, &c. . . . on the day when God made heaven and earth and the vegetation of the field, before it had come forth on the earth, and all the herbs of the field before they had grown." Bacon argues that the latter meaning would be more in accordance with the Latin, but would contradict the narrative of the first chapter of Genesis. He is therefore of opinion that, in the phrase *omne virgultum agri antequam oriretur in terra*, the words *omne*

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Berger, *Quam notitiam linguae Hebraicae habuerint Christiani medii aevi temporibus in Gallia*, Paris, 1893, p. 9 sq.

<sup>2</sup> VIII., p. 480 sqq.

*virgultum* are in the nominative ; and in the sentence *omnemque herbam regionis priusquam germinaret*, the word *terra* had to be supplied or understood, as the subject to *germinaret*.<sup>1</sup> Bacon adopts this interpretation, not only with a view to solve the contradiction between the two chapters, but also in order to reconcile the Latin translation with the Hebrew text. But he adds that the sense would be much clearer if we had the word *herba* in the nominative.

Bacon mentions, thereupon, a certain Andrew (*Andreas quidam*), who wrote *herba* in the nominative, and inserted a negative particle to the verbs *oriretur* and *germinaret*, "quite in accordance with the Hebrew text." Bacon is very angry at this. How dares Andrew, he complains, make his translation, which is not *nostra translatio*, appear as if it were ours, the authorised Latin text? His was not a commentary or any translation ; it was nothing but a literal construing of the Hebrew text. The worst of it is, he continues, that many people attributed to Andrew an authority which he did not

<sup>1</sup> "Istae sunt generationes coeli et terrae quando creatae sunt in die qua fecit Dominus Deus coelum et terram, et omne virgultum agri, antequam oriretur in terra, omnemque herbam regionis priusquam germinaret." . . . Est igitur hic sensus literae : Istae sunt generationes coeli et terrae, &c. . . . et priusquam terra, supple, germinaret omnem herbam regionis. Si vero esset ibi omnis herba in nominativo casu, tunc planior esset litera; sed potest suppleri nominativus casus, sicut terra quae germinaret. . . . Unde non intelligendum, quod sicut Deus fecit coelum et terram in principio, quod fecerit virgulta et herbas, quia hoc falsum est. . . . Sed hic evidentior esset litera si *herba* poneretur in nominativo casu, &c.

possess. Nobody, since Bede, had received the sanction of the Church to expound Scripture; and although Andrew was undoubtedly a well-read man, "and probably knew Hebrew," for all that he enjoyed no authority; therefore he cannot be credited, but the Hebrew text must be consulted, to see whether he was right or wrong. If he be right, credence was due to the Hebrew, but not to him; if wrong, he involved us in the danger of taking his text for ours, the authorised text. Nevertheless, Bacon proceeds, Andrew has the great merit of instigating us to consult the Hebrew text, whenever we meet in our translations with some difficulty. Thus, in the passage under consideration, and in many other passages, but few people would have thought of the true meaning, if it had not been for Andrew.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Veruntamen Andreas quidam qui exponit Bibliam ad literam ponit *herbam* in nominativo casu, et literam quamdam, ac si nostra esset, repetit, cum duplici negatione. Sed omnino utitur litera Latina, secundum quod construitur Hebraeum ad literam, ut superius dixi, et non est nostra translatio. Propter quod nescio de quo intromittit se de hac expositione, quia et literam nostram deberet exponere, et non aliam, quae etiam nullius translationis est, sed solius literalis constructionis Hebraei. Haec ideo dixi propter multos qui dant auctoritatem Andraeae, cum nec hic nec alibi sit ei danda; eo quod post Bedam non fuit aliquis cui ecclesia dederit auctoritatem in expositione Scripturae, sicut patet in decretis, et constat Andream ibi non esse nominatum. Quamvis igitur fuerat literatus homo, et probabiliter scivit Hebraeum, tamen quia non est dignus auctoritate tanta, non est ei credendum, sed recurrendum est ad Hebraeum de quo loquitur, et si verum dicat, credendum est Hebraeo, sed non ipsi. Si autem falsum et minus bene, sicut hic, involvit nos in quadam litera quae non est nostra, redarguendus sit quia ipse ponit; sed non est, immo est

Now, who was this Andrew, who had the capacity and at the same time the courage, to amend the Latin translation of the Bible after the original Hebrew text? It is evident that Bacon's orthodoxy had to struggle with a sincere admiration for this expositor of Scripture. It is superfluous to say that he was not the Jew Andrew of whom Bacon declares that he used to help Michael Scot with his translations. The Andrew mentioned here was evidently a Christian theologian of considerable merit. I venture to identify him with the Englishman Andrew, an Augustinian monk, who lived about 1150, and was a pupil of Hugo de Sancto Victore.<sup>1</sup> He is said to have written commentaries on the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Kings, Chronicles,

litera quae construit Hebraeum ad literam, ut praedixi. In hoc autem probandus est multum, quod excitat nos ad localia dubia nostrae translationis multotiens, licet non semper, et transmittit nos ad Hebraeum, ut expositiones quaeramus certius in radice. Pauci enim cogitarent de vera expositione istius passus et aliorum multorum, nisi Andream reciperent in hac parte.

<sup>1</sup> Fabricius, *Bibliotheca Latina Mediae et Infimae Aetatis*, s.v.: "Andreas, natione Anglus, Monachus Augustinianus S. Victoris, Paris, circa annum 1150, Hugonis de S. Victore discipulus. Hujus *Commentarios in Esaiam* perstringit Richardus de S. Victore libris de Emanuele. Illos commentarios MStos in Regia Bibliotheca Parisiensi extare testatur Oudin, sicut etiam in aliis Bibliothecis Historicam Magistri Andreae expositionem in Pentateuchum, libros Regum, Paralipomenon, Parabolas et Ecclesiastem, Daniele, Prophetas Minores, et Maccabaeorum libros. Idem minime nugacem, sed sensu gravem hunc scriptorem esse iudicat. Hisce Pitseus pag. 214 addit quoque in Josue, librum Judicum, Ecclesiastem, et in Jeremiam. Andream hunc refellit Lyranus ad 1 Sam. x. v. 8. Adde Jacobum Quétif, Tom. I., de *Scriptis Dominicanorum*, p. 479."

Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, the Minor Prophets, and the Books of the Maccabaeans. His commentaries are reputed to have been of a learned and important character. He is quoted by Nicholas de Lira (1 Sam. x. 8) and others. It is said that a number of his commentaries were formerly extant, or are extant still, in Paris and elsewhere. If the latter be true, it might be worth while, in the interests of the history of letters, to try and obtain a description of such MSS. I believe him to be the same Andrew who is blamed and praised, in one breath, by Roger Bacon; and if my conjecture be correct, we may add this "Magister Andreas, natione Anglus," to the scanty list of Early English Hebraists.

After all that has been said, it must be confessed that Early England offers almost a blank in the field of Hebrew literature. On the Continent it was only a little better.<sup>1</sup> A complete revolution in thought, and a considerable increase of general knowledge, was required to prepare the way towards an improvement in that direction. Hebrew had to await its turn; it had to stand aside till the conditions of learning became favourable to its appreciation, and till the right man arose who was able to impart the necessary impetus to the study of that language.

But in this particular instance it was only the former cause, the unfortunate condition of the time, which delayed the advancement of this branch of letters; for the right man had

<sup>1</sup> See p. 131 *sqq.*



arisen two centuries before Reuchlin was born. Roger Bacon, a Franciscan friar of the thirteenth century, was not only a theologian of unparalleled erudition and boldness of spirit, but embodied besides the accumulated knowledge of half-a-dozen scholars—philologists, philosophers, scientists, chemical students, and inventors—of two or three hundred years after his death. Born between 1210 and 1215,<sup>1</sup> he at first devoted himself at Oxford to the study of grammar and logic. Having made himself acquainted with the principles of philosophy, and having entered upon the study of science, he went to Paris to continue his training. He afterwards returned to Oxford. His devotion to learning surpassed that of any of his contemporaries. He sacrificed everything to his thirst for knowledge. He was not satisfied with stocking his mind with everything that could possibly be learned, and with digesting, classifying, and harmonising all the stores of erudition mastered by him; but he also was indefatigable in his work of advancing learning among his contemporaries. He instructed young men in languages, mathematics, and other disciplines. He invented and procured such instruments as were indispensable to the pursuit of science; he drew upon himself the sneers and obloquy of his fellow-scholars at Oxford, to whom such a mode of proceeding was incomprehensible, and therefore objectionable. He impoverished

<sup>1</sup> See the *Opus Majus of Roger Bacon*, edited by Mr. John Henry Bridges, Oxford, 1897, Introduction, p. xxi sqq.; *Fr. Rogeri Bacon Opera quaedam inedita*, edited by J. S. Brewer, London, 1859, Preface.

himself in these pursuits, and in the purchase of rare books, spending two thousand livres on his own education.

Unfortunately, he entered the order of the Franciscans, and thus deprived himself of all freedom of action. His independence of mind roused the suspicions of those who were his superiors in rank, but his inferiors in everything else. His experiments were looked upon as a practice of magic. But he struggled on, in spite of all obstacles, and a fortunate circumstance enabled him at length to make an attempt to put in writing the results of his lifelong studies.

About 1264 the Cardinal Guy Le Gros, or De Foulques, Bishop of Sabina, who afterwards became Pope under the name of Clement IV., was sent by Pope Urban IV. to England to intervene in the disputes between Henry III. and his barons. His mission failed, and in his efforts to bring the barons to submission he met with insults, which rankled in his breast for ever after. But one great result followed : during his stay in this country he made the acquaintance of Roger Bacon. Bacon's relatives were, with few exceptions, ardent royalists, who had sacrificed their fortune in their master's cause. Raymond of Laon, a clerk, seems to have drawn the Cardinal's attention to Roger Bacon. He was sent to communicate to the latter the prelate's wish to peruse Bacon's writings. Guy de Foulques had meanwhile become Pope, and Bacon sent a gentleman, named Bonecor, to him, to explain that, as a Franciscan, he was not allowed to write a book without a

written mandate and a papal dispensation to that effect. The writings, Bacon says, demanded by the cardinal were not composed ; he had written nothing on science before he entered his order, and he was afterwards unable to do so because a strict prohibition had been passed, under penalty of many days' fasting on bread and water, against any work, written either by himself or any one belonging to his house, being communicated to strangers. He could not entrust copyists with the work, because they would only copy his words to serve themselves or others, without any regard to his wishes. The Pope thereupon sent [Raymond of Laon] a second time to Bacon, commanding him on his apostolical authority to transmit to him a fair copy of the work which had been the subject of their correspondence, setting aside all ordinances of his superiors to the contrary ; and to make known to him, the Pope, the remedies he considered most advisable for removing the dangers he had formerly pointed out. All this was to be done secretly and without delay.

Armed with this authorisation from the Pope, he tried to induce "friends and kinsmen, great and small," to assist him in carrying out the work. He was poor ; in fact, he was, as a Franciscan monk, bound to poverty by his vows. The fortune he once possessed had been spent on the acquisition of learning before he entered the order. His advances were, in most cases, met with opposition and slights. He was looked upon as an importunate beggar, and although a few friends assisted



him from their scanty means, the work had to be frequently interrupted for want of money.

Bacon thought he had found in Pope Clement IV. a man after his own heart. He imagined that the Pope, when demanding of him to produce his work, was swayed by purely scientific motives. He read his own wishes into the Pope's letter. He laid, I think, too much stress on the Pope's desire of obtaining a fair copy of his work, and made too light of that part of the letter in which he was enjoined to point out the remedies he considered imperative for a better government of the Church. Severe as Bacon is in his exposure of the corrupted state of the latter, he deals with it only as one of the many subjects he thought he was asked to deal with. But it was the clerico-political aspects of Bacon's views which must have been reported to the Pope, and it was these that induced the latter to summon Bacon to transmit to him a copy of his book in fair writing. [Clement IV.] from political and hierarchical motives, wished to obtain a concise and clearly written report on the unsatisfactory manner in which the affairs of the Church were managed; on that which Bacon termed "the quibbles and frauds of the jurists," "the rattle of litigation," &c. He required such report, either for the intelligence department of the supreme government of the Church, or for his own private enlightenment on such matters; and the words in his mandate, "et per tuas declares literas quae tibi videntur adhibenda esse remedia circa illa quae nuper

esse tanti discriminis intimasti," give, perhaps, the clue to the real motive for making the demand. This would explain Clement's anxiety to keep the affair "as secret as possible" (*et hoc quanto secretius poteris facias indilate*). There would have been no call for such secrecy on questions of philosophy and science; but the Pope thought only of questions of Church policy. The Pope had, perhaps, no clearer notions about all those questions to the exploration of which Roger Bacon had devoted his life than the rest of his contemporaries, nor any greater desire to receive information about them; and it may be assumed that Bacon was as much in advance of him as of all others. Brewer eulogises the Pope because, "in an age of great political disorder, when the storm was still muttering which had shaken mediaeval society to its basis, he retained his regard for philosophy," and "at all events proved himself so superior to the prejudices of his age as to express some desire to hear what the philosopher was so ready to communicate." I doubt whether these eulogies are deserved. Clement wished to hear from a man who was, as far as concerned England, of the same political opinions as himself, the complaints he had to make against the management of the Church, and the remedies he suggested. It is doubtful whether he was concerned about anything else that agitated the philosopher's mind. Brewer says that "Clement's lengthy correspondence is filled with the ordinary burthen of official business." Mr. Bridges calls him "the busiest man in Christendom."

Such misunderstanding on the part of Clement as to Bacon's aims and objects would account for the latter's numerous complaints that the Pope, who, he had hoped, would purge the Church from fraud and contentions, had "forgotten to write to his superiors in his excuse; and, as he could not divulge to them 'the secret,' they threw obstacles in his way"; and that the Pope "had overlooked his expenses." But Bacon, only too delighted to be summoned by the Pope to pen, as he thought, the results of his lifelong researches in the fields of learning, cheerfully proceeded with the execution of the task in spite of all obstacles.<sup>1</sup>

The mutual misunderstanding between Bacon and Clement was the most fortunate blunder that ever assisted the cause of learning. We owe to it the composition of Bacon's trilogy, the *Opus Majus*, the *Opus Minus*, and the *Opus Tertium*. Unfortunately, only a small piece of the *Opus Minus* is now extant; but the *Opus Majus* and the *Opus Tertium* have, happily, been preserved. Bacon deals in these books with theology, grammar, music and dancing, mathematics, the calendar, optics, experimental philosophy, and ethics. The three works were composed and clearly written out [for the Pope] within fifteen or eighteen months of the arrival of the mandate. They were, as intended by Bacon, written in a popular and easy style. Bacon con-

<sup>1</sup> Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, iv. p. 265: "Verum est quoddam ejus Opusculum sibi transmitti voluisse Clementem, an legendi profundi hominis arcana cupidine, an subtilioris, vel obscurioris examinandi desiderio, non plane constat ex subjectis litteris Pontificiis, ex Vaticano transcriptis."

sidered them as introductory treatises, as mere summaries of the results of his researches. He apologises for not having his *Scriptum Principale* ready, by reason of various impediments, and because of its prolixity; otherwise, he says, "he would have delivered in distinct and formal treatises a whole system of the grammar of the Latins, of logic, of natural philosophy and metaphysics, of speculative alchemy, of the four speculative, not to add practical, mathematics."

When it is said that in his survey of the whole field of learning he also dealt with grammar, it must not be taken in the narrow sense, as if he occupied himself merely with the elucidation of the principal rules of the accidence and syntax of some particular languages. His encyclopaedic mind soared here also high above the strata of detail, which lay unfolded before him, and of which he took a comprehensive bird's-eye view. He generalised from the details, not of one language, but of groups of dialects, which he tried to compare, and from which he attempted to draw rules applicable to all. Foremost in his mind were two groups of languages, which centred round Latin and Hebrew. Latin was a living language in those days; it was used in greater or lesser purity by every scholar, lawyer, and cleric. It is, therefore, a matter of course that Bacon paid particular attention to it. The motives that induced him to advocate the [study of Hebrew] were of a complex nature.

First and foremost stand the religious motives. Hebrew was to Bacon, as it was to Johann Reuchlin, the language in

which God had revealed himself to his chosen people ; and the religious books, divinely revealed, or, at least, divinely inspired, were divulged in that language. Bacon shared the opinion of many great men before and after him, that wisdom, in the widest sense of the word, was delivered to mankind by God Himself. The bearers of divine religious truth, singled out in the Bible, were, at the same time, those to whom all things knowable had been revealed. The biblical cosmogony was only a summary ; the details, though not written down, were, as an oral tradition, delivered to later generations by the heroes of the Bible.

“God revealed philosophy first to his saints, to whom he also gave the Law. He did so, because philosophy was indispensable to the understanding, the promulgation, the acceptance, and the defence of the Law, and in many other ways also ; and it is for this reason that it was delivered, complete in all details, in the Hebrew language.”<sup>1</sup>

“The whole wisdom of philosophy was given by God, who, after the creation of the world, delivered it to the patriarchs and the prophets. God gave them longevity, in order to afford them the time to comprehend it all. . . . They possessed wisdom in its entirety before the infidel sages obtained it, such as the famous poets, or the Sibyls, or the seven wise men, or the philosophers who lived after them. . . . All their information about heavenly bodies, about the secrets of nature and the superior sciences, about sects, God, Christianity, the beauties of virtues,

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<sup>1</sup> *Opus Tertium*, x. p. 32 : “Revelavit igitur Deus primo philosophiam sanctis suis, quibus et legem dedit ; nam philosophia utilis est legi Dei, ad intellectum, ad promulgationem, ad probationem, ad defensionem, et multis aliis modis, ut patet per opera quae scribo. Et ideo primo tradita est principaliter et complete in lingua Hebraea.”



and the rectitude of the laws, of eternal reward and punishment, resurrection of the dead, and all other questions, were derived from God's saints. The philosophers did not find them out; God revealed them to His saints. . . . Adam, Solomon, and the others testified to the truth of the faith, not only in holy writ, but also in books of philosophy, long before there were any philosophers properly so-called."<sup>1</sup>

"Philosophy was developed by Noah and his sons, particularly by Shem. All philosophers and great poets lived after them and after Abraham. For Aristotle and all other authorities agree that the first philosophising people were the Chaldaeans and Egyptians. But although Noah and his sons taught the Chaldaeans, before Abraham

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<sup>1</sup> *Opus Tertium*, xxiv. p. 79: ". . . tota sapientia philosophiæ data est a Deo, quia sancti patriarchae et prophetae a principio mundi eam receperunt a Deo; quibus Deus dedit longitudinem vitae. . . . Nam ut probem quod sancti primo habuerunt philosophiam et sapientiam totam ante quam philosophi infideles, revolve totum tempus a principio mundi, discurrens per omnes aetates et saecula, ut inveniam quando primo fuerunt singuli, qui titulum sapientiae habuerunt, sive sint poetae praeclari, sive Sybillae, sive septem sapientes, sive philosophi qui post illos septem venerunt . . . quod de coelestibus mira dicunt, et de secretis naturae, et scientiarum magnalium, et de sectis, et de Deo, et de secta Christi, et de virtutum pulchritudine et legum honestate, et de vita aeterna gloriosa et poenali, et de resurrectione mortuorum, et de omnibus. Nam philosophi habuerunt haec omnia a sanctis Dei; unde philosophi non invenerunt hoc primo, nec homo, sed Deus revelavit suis sanctis. Nam quis homo per se posset scire coelestia, et indicia rerum per ea, et alia infinita quae scribunt philosophi? Certe nec Salomon, nec Adam maximus, nec aliquis; sed Deus ipse revelavit legem suam sanctis, et philosophiam propter intellectum legis, et extensionem, et probationem, et promulgationem, et defensionem; et hi sancti scripserunt libros philosophiae omnes. Et non solum in sacra Scriptura fecerunt mentionem de veritate fidei, sed in suis libris philosophicis, et praenuntiaverunt omnia antequam philosophi fuerunt." Cf. *ibid.* viii. p. 24.

taught the Egyptians, yet was methodical study not introduced at once, but gradually developed by practice.”<sup>1</sup>

Following in the footsteps of his predecessors, including the authors of some writings erroneously attributed to Aristotle, Bacon proceeds to trace the chain of transmission of philosophy. He mixes together biblical and mythological personages, dealing with the latter after the method first introduced by Euhemerus of Crete.<sup>2</sup>

“Zoroaster invented the magic arts; he was the son of Ham, the son of Noah. Io, who was afterwards called Isis, taught the Egyptians to write; for, although they had been taught everything by Abraham, they had no literature. Isis was the daughter of Inachus, the first king of the Argives, who was a contemporary of Jacob and Esau. According to others, she introduced letters from Ethiopia. Minerva, the inventress of many things, lived about the same time. Under Phoroneus, Inachus’s son, moral philosophy was first introduced among the heathens. Prometheus was the first great teacher of philosophy, and his brother Atlas the first great astrologer. But he was preceded by the great astronomers, the sons of Noah, and Abraham, and whatever he knew he had learned when he was living in slavery among the children of Israel. His grandson, Mercury, became the great teacher of mankind. Apollo’s son, Esculapius, was the first teacher of medicine among the heathens. Apollo himself, a great expert in medicine, cured by spells and incantations, but the son followed the true method of experience.

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<sup>1</sup> *Opus Majus*, ii. 9; vol. i. p. 46, Bridges: “Noe et filii ejus multiplicaverunt philosophiam, et praecipue Sem praevaluit in hac parte. . . . Aristoteles et omnes consentiunt in hoc, quod primi philosophantes fuerunt Chaldaei et Aegyptii. . . . Quia licet Noe et filii ejus docuerunt Chaldaeos antequam Abraham docuit Aegyptios, tamen non fuit studium more scholastico ita cito institutum, sed paulatim crevit ordo ejus et exercitium.”

<sup>2</sup> See p. 241.

But both had been preceded by Adam and Enoch. Of all branches of knowledge medicine is the most necessary ; there can, therefore, be no doubt but that it was invented by the sons of Adam and Noah, who were so wise, and to whom long life was vouchsafed for the purpose of completing the study of wisdom.”<sup>1</sup>

“Aristotle would never have been able to achieve such great results without the protection and pecuniary aid of kings, especially of Alexander the Great. King Solomon himself possessed great wealth, and was, therefore, able to complete his philosophical works in Hebrew. The sons of Adam and Noah, and their offspring, were able to master all knowledge by the power of wealth and longevity.”<sup>2</sup>

“Philosophy was delivered on four distinct occasions. It was delivered for the first time in Hebrew, complete in all its details, by Adam and Noah ; the second time by Solomon, but Aristotle and Avicenna, who mark the two other epochs in the history of philosophy, were only able to deliver it incompletely, because they were heathens.”<sup>3</sup>

The origin of all wisdom and knowledge must thus, in Bacon’s estimation, be sought in the Hebrew writings, as divulged by Hebrew saints and sages, and the Bible is the ever-flowing mainspring from which all human enlightenment issued. But

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 46 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> *Opus Tertium*, viii. p. 24 : “Aristoteles quidem, auctoritate et auxiliis regum, et maxime Alexandri, fecit in Graeco quae voluit, et multis millibus hominum usus est in experientia scientiarum, et expensis copiosis, sicut historiae narrant. Salomon vero, rex ditissimus, similiter complevit philosophiam in Hebraeo ; et filii Adae et Noae, et filii ejus, et Abraham, et illa familia, tum divitiarum potentia, tum longitudine vitae, omnia compleverunt.”

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.: “Sic igitur quater fuit philosophia sufficienter tradita, sed bis omnino completa ; scilicet, primo per filios Adae et Noae, et secundo per Salomonem. Caeteri duo juxta sua tempora tradiderunt sufficienter, sed non omnino compleverunt, quia fuerunt infideles.”—x. p. 32.



it was known only from translations ; and Bacon's distrust of translations, though not stronger than that of Reuchlin after him, was yet accentuated by the former in much more vigorous terms. He objected to translations for two reasons ; in the first place, because of the impossibility of reproducing the exact meaning of the original, and, secondly, because of the inferior quality of the existing translations, and the incompetency of the translators. Quoting Jerome, he says that no language can be faithfully rendered into another. That which sounded well in one tongue became absurd and ridiculous when expressed in another. Homer became ridiculous when translated into Latin, and that most eloquent poet could hardly be said to speak at all. Anybody could make the experiment for himself, let him only try and translate a scientific work into his mother tongue. He could not simply transfer the terms, say of logic, by equivalent terms in his own language ; he must invent new expressions, and he would only be understood by himself. This is not only the case when dealing with two totally different languages, but also when handling two different dialects of one, as, for instance, Picardian, Gallic, Provençal, and all the other idioms, from the confines of Apulia to the borders of Spain ; their common mother being Latin. Another drawback was that, in works on theology and philology, many terms were taken over verbally, which could only be written, pronounced, and understood by those who were acquainted with the language from which they were derived. The cause of this lay in the fact that the Latin

vocabulary could not supply equivalent terms, because no original work on theology and philosophy had been composed in Latin. All texts were originally either Hebrew, Greek, or Arabic. The entire groundwork of wisdom was composed in languages other than Latin, and "waters drawn from the fountains were sweeter than those taken from turbid rivulets, and wine was purer and more wholesome when kept in the original cask, than when poured from vessel to vessel." If, therefore, the Latins wished to drink the pure and wholesome liquor from the fountain of wisdom, they would be obliged to turn their attention to the Hebrew, Greek, and Arabic languages. It was impossible to recognise the proper form and beauty of wisdom in all its dignity, except in the languages in which it was originally laid down. Only those who had tasted of the well of wisdom in its primary fulness and purity, could know the delight it afforded; all others were like those stricken with paralysis, who could not judge of the sweetness of food; or like those born deaf, who were unable to enjoy harmonies of sound.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Opus Tertium*, xxv. p. 90: "Nam quod bene resonat in una, absurdum est in alia et ridiculosum. Unde Hieronymus dicit libro memorato, cum Homerum transfers in Latinum videbis ridiculosum et poetam eloquentissimum vix loquentem. Et hoc potest quilibet probare, si scientiam quam novit velit in linguam maternam convertere. Certe logicus non poterit exprimere suam logicam si monstrasset per vocabula linguae maternae; sed oporteret ipsum nova fingere, et ideo non intelligeretur nisi a se ipso. Et sic de aliis scientiis. Et hoc videmus in idiomatibus diversis ejusdem linguae; nam idioma est proprietas alicujus linguae distincta ab alia; ut Picardium, et Gallicum, et Provinciale, et omnia idiomata a finibus Apuliae usque ad finis Hispaniae. Nam lingua Latina

There are striking points of resemblance between this first explorer and the more successful pioneer of Hebrew lore in Christian Europe. Both Bacon and Reuchlin had an un-

bounded veneration for Jerome, whom they took as a pattern est in his omnibus una et eadem, secundum substantiam, sed variata secundum idiomata diversa. . . . Quarta causa potest esse quod vocabula infinita ponuntur in textibus theologiae et philosophiae de alienis linguis, quae non possunt scribi, nec proferri, nec intelligi, nisi per eos qui linguas sciunt. Et necesse fuit hoc fieri propter hoc, quod scientiae fuerunt compositae in lingua propria, et translatore non invenerunt in lingua Latina vocabula sufficientia.”—Ibid., viii. p. 24: “Et non fuit (philosophia) ab aliis tradita, nec unquam apud Latinos facta, nec complete translata, sed imperfecte, et pessime per partes peiores ab aliis linguis transfusa.”—*Compendium Studii Philosophiae*, viii. p. 465 *sqq.*, Brewer: “Latini nullum textum composuerunt, scilicet neque theologiae neque philosophiae. Omnes textus facti sunt primo in Hebraeo bis, tertio in Graeco, quarto in Arabico. . . . Cum igitur totus textus sapientiae sit factus in aliis linguis, et dulcius ex ipso fonte bibuntur aquae quam in rivulis turbidis, atque vinum purius est et sanius, atque virtuosius dum in primitivo vase tenetur, quam quum de vase in vas transfunditur, manifestum est necessarium fore Latinis, ut si volunt puro, et sano, et efficaci sapientiae liquore potari, quod in fonte Hebraici sermonis, et Graeci, et Arabici, tanquam in primitivis vasis, discant sapientiam exaurire. Nunquam enim poterunt dignitatem sapientiae in propria forma et figura contemplari nec ut est in decore suo, nisi in illis linguis eam aspiciant, in quibus primitus fuerat constituta. O, quantum placet gustus sapientiae his qui sic sunt fontali et primaria plenitudine delibuti! Sed qui hoc non sunt experti non sentiunt delectationem sapientiae; sicut nec paralyticus potest cibi dulcedinem judicare. Et quia affectus eorum est solutus paralysi, et intellectus eorum est in hac parte sicut surdus a nativitate ad delectationem harmoniae, ideo non dolent de tanto damno sapientiae, cum tamen sit proculdubio infinitum.”—This is followed by complaints about translations and translators similar to those in the *Opus Tertium*. The subject is more fully treated in the third book of the *Opus Majus*, vol. i. p. 66 *sqq.*, Bridges.

after whom to shape their course in life. Both believed that all wisdom had been revealed by God to the Israelites and was transmitted by them to the rest of mankind. Thus Reuchlin expressed his belief that the science of medicine was taught by God to the Jews, from whom it passed later to the Greeks and the Romans, and, finally, to the Germans. A deeply felt aversion to translations was common to both. Reuchlin, when quite a youth, composed a Latin dictionary under the title of *Vocabularius Breviloquus*, in which he was frequently under the necessity of quoting Hebrew words without understanding them, and he repeatedly expresses his disgust at this. The comparison of translations to "wine poured from cask to cask" was made in almost the same terms by Bacon and by Reuchlin.<sup>1</sup>

But in the case of Bacon the horror of translations was intensified by the condition of the existing versions, which he considered to be of the worst possible kind. His dissatisfaction knew no bounds, and he emptied the vials of his wrath upon translations and translators alike. He indiscriminately condemns all translations from Greek authors; and in regard to versions of the Bible, he does not scruple to point out the errors of some of his most venerated divines. Like others before him, he demands of every translator a complete mastery of the language from which he translates, of the language into which he translates, and of the subject on which the

<sup>1</sup> See p. 128.

work under consideration treats.<sup>1</sup> "Give us a translator of that kind, and we shall praise him." But there are none such. There were only two whose versions were of real value: Boethius, who knew the languages, and Robert Grosseteste, whose knowledge of languages was, indeed, slight, but who was a complete master of the subjects. Take, however, such translators as Gerard of Cremona, and Michael Scot, and Alfred the Fleming, and Hermann the German. They translated a number of books on all kinds of scientific subjects, but the amount of mistakes they made was incredible. They neither knew the languages nor the subjects. "The Bishop Hermann the German is still alive, and I used to know him well. When I asked him about some Arabic works on logic, he told me roundly that he knew no logic. Not knowing logic, he could not properly know any other science." But he did not even have a sufficient knowledge of Arabic, and, when in Spain, he employed some Saracens, and they were the real authors of his translations. The same must be said of Michael Scot, whose translations were for the most part the work of a certain

<sup>1</sup> Jehudah ben Salomo Alcharizi, who wrote about the time when Roger Bacon was born, expresses this canon about translators tersely and elegantly in the introduction to his translation of Maimonides's commentary to the Mishnah, *Seder Zeraim*, in the following terms:—

כי אין לאדם להעתיק ספר עד אשר ידע שלשה דברים  
 סוד הלשון אשר יעתיק מנבוליה  
 וסוד הלשון אשר יעתיק אליה  
 וסוד החכמה אשר הוא מפרש מליה



Jew, Andrew. The others were of the same calibre, but William the Fleming was the worst of all. Besides, Bacon continues, Greeks, Arabs, and Jews did not give the Christians, who applied to them, the genuine works, but only mutilated and corrupted copies, especially when they perceived that they had ignorant people to deal with.

The consequence was that the few translations that had been made of the many Hebrew, Greek, and Arabic works that existed were unintelligible. The student lost all that was beautiful and useful, and philosophy was doomed. It was a waste of time to study, from such versions, Aristotle's works, which are the basis of all wisdom. It would have been much better if Aristotle had never been translated; the more you read, the less you understood. What was the consequence? The scholars turned away from such translations, and sought a remedy elsewhere. If he could have his way he would have all such translations burned.

It was the same with the text of the Scriptures. Jerome had pointed out numerous errors in the Septuagint, and in the translations of Theodotion and Aquila. He had a perfect knowledge both of the languages and of theology; nevertheless, his text cannot always be relied on. There was a general outcry against him; all stood up for the authority of the Septuagint as for very life. Jerome was called a falsifier and corrupter of the Scriptures, because he attempted to introduce new translations. He, therefore, adapted himself to the previous versions,

sometimes to Aquila's, sometimes to that of Symmachus, but most frequently to the Septuagint, although he knew that these translations did not accord with the Hebrew original. Besides, Jerome himself admits that he erred frequently, on account of undue haste.

Again, ignorance of languages occasioned the existing translations to become hopelessly corrupt. The theologians understood neither the text, nor the commentaries, in which Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic were hopelessly mixed up. The Vulgate was overrun with errors, and, most of all, in the Parisian copy. Everybody interfered with the text; there were as many correctors, or rather corrupters, as readers. Whenever any one did not understand the text, he altered it; a thing which nobody would dare to do with poetry or works on science. But as to the text of the Bible, everybody altered it as the fancy struck him.<sup>1</sup>

Besides the corrupted condition of all translations, so bitterly complained of, there was a further stimulus for Bacon to urge the necessity of obtaining an authentic text of the Bible and of other ancient works, and of studying languages and the arcana of nature, in his hopes of achieving by these means the conversion of infidels and schismatics. It is superfluous to say that he religiously believed in the tenets of his

<sup>1</sup> Bacon's estimate of translations, as sketched here, is laid down : *Opus Majus*, iii. vol. i. pp. 67 *sqq.*, 77 *sqq.* ; iv. p. 221, Bridges. *Opus Minus*, pp. 325, 330-349. *Opus Tertium*, x. p. 33 ; xv. p. 55 ; xxiii. pp. 75-78 ; xxv. pp. 89-95. *Compendium Studii Philosophiae*, viii. p. 465 *sqq.*

faith becoming ultimately the only and universally acknowledged religious persuasion all over the world. The infidels had therefore to be either converted or exterminated. The latter expedient had to be applied to those who were foredoomed to perdition ("praesciti ad infernum"). But it could be effected on a much larger scale, and with less danger to the faithful, by scientific resource, than by the crude laical methods of warfare, which were, at the best, uncertain as to the results. Alexander the Great achieved in his wars greater results, and with less loss to himself, by following Aristotle's counsels than by his numerous and well-equipped armies. It was by the light of wisdom that the conversion of the infidels would be brought about; and the obstinate would be better removed from the confines of the Church by the instrumentality of wisdom than by the effusion of Christian blood.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Opus Majus*, i. vol. i. p. 1, Bridges: "Nam per lumen sapientiae ordinatur Ecclesia Dei, Respublica fidelium disponitur, infidelium conversio procuratur; et illi, qui in malitia obstinati sunt, valent per virtutem sapientiae reprimi quam per effusionem sanguinis Christiani."—*Cf. ibid.*, p. 220 *sqq.*—*Opus Minus*, p. 320: "... et tempus ponitur quo omnino destruetur secta Saracenorum."—*Opus Tertium*, v. p. 20: "Nam utilitas philosophiae est respectu theologiae, et ecclesiae, et reipublicae, et conversionis infidelium, et reprobationis eorum, qui converti non possunt."—*Ibid.*, xxvi. p. 95: "Et ad conversionem infidelium et schismaticorum manifesta est utilitas linguarum. Sed de reprobatione eorum qui converti non possunt, non est evidens. Nam hoc est unum de secretis secretorum, et quod apud vulgum reputaretur magicum, vel falsum, &c."—*Compendium Studii Philosophiae*, i. p. 395: "Quarto, ut omnes nationes infidelium praedestinatae ad vitam aeternam convertantur magna efficacia et gloria fidei Christianae. Quinto, ut qui converti non possunt, praesciti ad



As an instance of a possible wholesale destruction of incorrigible infidels by the resources of civilisation, Bacon mentions the use of gunpowder. That explosive, although invented before his time, was known to him only as "a children's toy of the size of the thumb of a man, which, when exploding, produces a noise and coruscation exceeding those of a thunder-clap." It appears that Bacon, although recognising the detonation and atmospheric disturbance caused by gunpowder, yet had no idea of the destructive application that might be made of its propelling properties. He thought that it was by some such explosive, flashing forth suddenly from broken pitchers by the application of torches, that Gideon was able to destroy, with only three hundred men, the innumerable army of the Midianites. Bacon, if he had known the degree of development the study of explosives would reach, would have pressed all dynamitards into the service of the Church, for he demands that the Church should utilise such appliances against its enemies; otherwise the Antichrist would not be slow in making use of them for his own purposes. This might easily be

infernum, reprimantur longe magis per vias et opera sapientiae, quam per bella civilia laicorum. Quod enim laicali ruditate turgescit non habet effectum nisi fortuito, sicut videmus in omnibus bellis eorum ultra mare et citra; sed opera sapientiae certa lege vallantur, et in finem debitum efficaciter diriguntur; sicut antiqui principes per sapientes philosophos operati sunt. Nam legimus quod Alexander Magnus consilio et sapientia Aristotelis destruxit magis quam debellavit decies centena millia hominum. . . ." Cf. *Epistolum de Secretis Operibus, &c.*, v. p. 535, Brewer.—*English Historical Review*, 1897, Fragment edited by Dr. Gasquet, pp. 499, 501.

prevented, if only princes and prelates would study the secrets of nature and art.<sup>1</sup>

But another motive besides the conversion of infidels actuated him in his desire to learn Hebrew; a powerful motive, which affected the minds of Bacon and, after him, of Reuchlin in equal measure. Both were swayed by the spirit of mysticism. But mysticism had in Reuchlin's time already been raised to a science, and served as a link to connect an effete scholasticism with modern philosophy and experimental science. In Roger Bacon's time it was still unsystematically mixed up with religion,

<sup>1</sup> *Opus Majus*, vi. vol. ii. p. 218, Bridges: "Quaedam (opera) tantum terrorem visui incutiunt, quod coruscationes nubium longe minus et sine comparatione perturbant; quibus operibus Gideon in castris Midianitarum consimilia aestimatur fuisse operatus. Et experimentum hujus rei capimus ex hoc ludicro puerili, quod fit in multis mundi partibus, scilicet ut instrumento facto ad quantitatem pollicis humani, ex violentia illius salis qui sal petrae vocatur tam horribilis sonus nascitur in ruptura tam modicae rei, scilicet modici pergameni, quod fortis tonitruum sentiatur excedere rugitum, et coruscationem maximam sui luminis jubar excedit."—*Ibid.*, p. 222: "Et hoc deberet ecclesia considerare contra infideles et rebelles, ut parcat sanguini Christiano, et maxime propter futura pericula in temporibus Antichristi, quibuscum Dei gratia facile esset obviare, si praelati et principes studium promoverent et secreta naturae et artis indagarent."—*Epistola de Secretis Operibus*, &c., vi. p. 536: "Nam soni velut tonitrua possunt fieri et coruscationes in aere, immo majori horrore quam illa quae fiunt per naturam. Nam modica materia adaptata, scilicet ad quantitatem unius pollicis, sonum facit horribilem et coruscationem ostendit vehementem. Et hoc fit multis modis; quibus omnis civitas et exercitus destruat, ad modum artificii Gideonis, qui lagunculis fractis, et lampadibus, igne exsiliente cum fragore inaeestimabili, infinitum Midianitarum destruxit exercitum cum trecentis hominibus."

philosophy, magic, knowledge of nature, according to the frame of mind of the philosopher who speculated on such matters. The devout minds both of Reuchlin and of Bacon believed in a spiritual and occult meaning of every word, of every letter, of the Hebrew Bible; and this acted on both as a stimulus to explore the unknown regions of Hebrew lore, and to establish the original, divinely inspired text of the Bible. Words can work wonders, above all such words as were delivered directly by God. Reuchlin laid down the results of such belief chiefly in the books *De Verbo Mirifico* and *De Arte Cabbalistica*. Bacon, in accordance with the encyclopaedic construction of his vast intellect, tried to go to the root of such conceptions, from which he expected the triumph of his Church.

He points out the difference between the use and the abuse of the power of words; they were used either in a holy and philosophical or in an unholy and magical manner. "For the same knife cuts bread and wounds a man. The application of the power of words was either the exercise of a natural force, or it was nothing, or else the work of the devil."<sup>1</sup>

"Since the creation of the world almost all miracles were performed by words. The word is the principal product of the rational soul, and its greatest delight. Words are possessed of great power when they

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<sup>1</sup> *Opus Tertium*, xxvi. p. 95: "Et per cultellum possum scindere panem et hominem vulnerare. Sic similiter per verba potest sapiens sapienter operari, et magicus magice. Sed alia ratio est in operatione hinc et inde. Nam unus facit per potestatem naturalem; alius aut nihil facit, aut diabolus auctor est operis."

are the result of profound thought, great longing, fixed intention, and strong confidence. By the co-operation of these four functions the rational soul is excited to give its impress and virtue to its own body, to things external, to its actions, and, above all, to the words which are produced from within, and receive therefore more of the virtue of the soul. Nature, says Avicenna, obeys the cogitations of the soul, as is shown by the hen, on whose leg a spur grew, by its feeling of triumph at the victory won by the cock. If thus Nature obeys the cogitations of the sensitive soul, how much more will it obey those of the intellectual soul of those who are only one degree below the angels? Man's outward appearance and voice varies as the greater or lesser sanctity of the soul. A considerable increase in the power of either the good or the bad soul modifies the voice and the air affected by the latter. The air thus formulated by the voice, and having received a strong impetus from the rational soul, can be changed accordingly, and change, in its turn, the things it contains, be they agents or patients. It is the same with the body. Body and soul forming a unit, the body naturally obeys the cogitations of the soul; they modify its outer appearance. It again affects, and is affected by, the air, which was itself affected by the voice. A further change is due to stellar influences. Whenever the voice is produced, the change wrought by it in the air is complicated by the effects of the constellations, and this again acts upon the things contained in the air. Everything depends, therefore, upon four influences: the voice formulating the air, the good or evil condition of the rational soul, the body, and the stars. When cogitating, intending, wishing, and strongly hoping for any change, a favourable condition of the heavenly bodies must be chosen in conjunction with the other influences; in the same way as a skilful physician selects suitable stellar conditions when desirous of working a cure. It was, as Avicenna says, in this way that the prophets and sages of old changed the matter of the world (*materiam mundi*), and produced rain, or drought, or other atmospheric changes, by the power of words. In this consists the art of alluring or repelling men and beasts, snakes and dragons. This is

the nature of every spell, and not the mere utterance of a word ; the latter will have no effect, unless the devil interferes. The other forces combined with the five conditions of the soul—strong thought, vehement wish, firm will, and either goodness or badness—are indispensable. The origin of songs, incantations, and various modes of writing must be traced to these influences.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Opus Tertium*, xxvi. p. 96 : “. . . omnia miracula facta a principio mundi fere facta sunt per verba. Et opus animae rationalis praecipuum est verbum, et in quo maxime delectatur. Et ideo cum verba proferuntur profunda cogitatione et magno desiderio, et recta intentione, et cum forti confidentia, habent magnam virtutem. Nam cum haec quatuor contingunt excitatur substantia animae rationalis fortius ad faciendum speciem et virtutem a se in corpus suum et res extra, et in opera sua, et maxime in verba, quae ab intrinsecus formantur ; et ideo plus de virtute animae recipiunt. Nam secundum quod Avicenna docet, octavo de Animalibus, natura obedit cogitationibus animae ; et docet in exemplo de gallina cui ex gloria victoriae galli crevit cornu in crure. Ex hoc igitur cognovimus, quod natura obedit cogitationibus animae sensitivae, ut ait ; sed longe magis obedit cogitationibus animae intellectivae, quae est dignior creaturarum praeter angelos. Et secundum quod anima est sancta vel peccatrix variatur generatio speciei et vocis ; et secundum quod anima est benevola vel malevola ; et sic virtus animae bonae vel malae fortiter multiplicata, imprimitur et incorporatur fortiter in voce, et in aëre deferente vocem. Et hic aër sic figuratus voce, et habens fortem speciem animae rationalis, potest alterari per hanc virtutem, et alterare res in eo contentas, in varios effectus et passiones varias. Similiter corpus fortiores speciem facit ex his cogitationibus et desideriis animae, et intentione, et confidentia. Nam quia unum per essentiam fit ex corpore et anima, natura corpus obedit cogitationibus animae, et facit suam speciem fortiores, quae etiam recipitur in aëre formato per vocem ; et sic aër alteratur per hanc speciem corporis sicut per speciem animae, et alterat res in eo contentas ; et secundum quod est malae vel bonae complexionis sic accidit passio in aëre et in rebus diversa . . . et opera quae fiunt hic inferius variantur secundum diversitatem coelestium constellationum. . . . Et est ista quad-



It is easy to perceive how this belief in the mystical power of words, and the conviction that every word of the Bible had a spiritual meaning apart from the literal sense, affected each other reciprocally. They raised the desire of establishing the correct text of the Bible to a religious duty, and imperatively demanded the study of the language in which it was originally conceived. Bacon repeatedly points to the importance of understanding the spiritual meaning of the text. Now "the text" is to Bacon what it was to all his predecessors and con-

ruplici specie et virtute, scilicet vocis figurantis aërem, et animae rationalis bonae vel malae, et corporis, et coelestis constellationis, potest ineffabilis fieri variatio et mirabilis in aëre, et in rebus contentis; et hoc si eligatur tempus bonae constellationis vel malae, secundum qualitatem alterationis quae cogitatur, et intenditur, et desideratur, et fortiter operatur. Nam tunc fiet alteratio certa secundum conditionem constellationis cum adiutorio aliarum virtutum operantium, sicut medicus peritus qui juxta desiderium purgandi choleram, quae est causa morbi, quaerit debitam constellationem in aliqua hora. . . . Et per hanc viam verborum aestimavit Avicenna in sexto Naturalium, quod prophetae et sapientes antiqui alterabant materiam mundi, ad pluvias et siccitates et alias alterationes aëris. Et aestimaverunt philosophi quod sic contingit allicere homines et animalia bruta et serpentes, et dracones de cavernis, et fugare secundum libitum hominis, et uti iis. Et hic oritur omne genus fascinationis; non quod fascinatio dicatur per solum verbum casualiter prolatum . . . et nihil operetur, nec fit aliquid, nisi diabolus propter peccata hominum operetur latenter. Sed si virtutes quatuor praedictae concurrant quinque conditionibus animae, scilicet forti cogitatione, desiderio vehementi, intentione certa et firma spe, bonitate animae vel malitia, et cum complexione corporis mala vel bona, tunc erit alteratio, quocunque modo vocetur, seu fascinatio sive aliud. Et hic oritur tota consideratio carminum et incantationum et characterum, &c."—Cf. *Opus Majus*, iv. vol. i. p. 395 *sqq.*, Bridges.

temporaries, namely, the Latin translation. But although it would be possible to study the literal meaning from "the text," the latter could be of very little avail for the knowledge of the spiritual sense. "Suppose even 'the text' to be correct to the letter, innumerable false and doubtful notions still remain on account of the ignorance of the languages from which the translations had been made." Therefore Bacon comes to the conclusion that there was only one remedy, the study of the original languages. "But our theologians do not even know the Hebrew alphabet."<sup>1</sup>

But all such ancillary motives as the improvement of Church management, the interests of theology and science, the spread of Christianity, the annihilation of incurable infidels, the understanding of the spiritual meaning of the Scriptures, were not the only levers that moved Bacon's mind towards the study of languages. He was, besides, powerfully affected by another fundamental incentive, of which, however,

<sup>1</sup> *Opus Minus*, p. 349: "Nam si litera est falsa pro majori parte et dubia in aliis, quae dubitatio cadit in virum sapientem, ut probatum est, tunc oportet quod sensus literalis sit consimilis, et per consequens sensus spiritualis. Deinde posito quod litera esset totaliter correcta, cum certa probatione, adhuc loquitur falsa et dubia quasi infinita. Et una rei hujus radix est ignorantia linguarum de quibus textus est translatus. . . . Unde Hieronymus semper inducit Hebraeum et Graecum fere ad omne verbum, quod exponit, et probat expositionem suam per linguas. . . . Sed nos theologi ignoramus ipsa alphabeta, quapropter oportet quod ignoremus Dei textum et expositiones sanctorum . . . nullus autem potest hoc intelligere, nisi sciat alphabetum Hebraeum et orthographiam eorum."—*Cf. ibid.*, p. 357.



he was perhaps less conscious than of any of the other, purely subservient, motives. Bacon possessed the true philological instinct; he had a keen perception of the connection subsisting between the various dialects belonging to groups of languages. At a time when that study was as yet entirely unknown in Europe, Bacon speculated upon the [kinship of languages,] and we need not be surprised that he extended the idea beyond its proper limits. He far surpassed Reuchlin in this respect. He meditated on the origin of all languages, on the primitive language, on the language spoken by Adam, and the way in which he found names for things. He ponders on what would happen if children were to grow up in a desert; whether they would have intercourse by speech, and how they would give expression to their mutual feelings when meeting under such circumstances. He considered such inquiries to form a part of grammar, and of no other discipline, and thinks them indispensable alike to theology, philosophy, and all other branches of wisdom.<sup>1</sup> The conclusion Bacon arrives at is that "there was a universal grammar, that the grammar of all languages was essentially the same, and that the differences were of a purely

<sup>1</sup> *Opus Tertium*, xxvii. p. 101: "... et multa intermiscui difficilia, ut de lingua prima Adæ et qualiter dedit nomina rebus; et an pueri in deserto nutriti aliqua lingua per se uterentur, et si obviarent sibi invicem quomodo mutuos indicarent affectus. . . . Unde reputo hanc partem grammaticæ summæ necessariam theologiæ, et philosophiæ, et toti sapientiæ. Et probo quod sit pars grammaticæ et non alterius sapientiæ."

accidental character.”<sup>1</sup> He declares that Arabic, Chaldaean, and Hebrew were only dialects of the same language, in the same way as Picardian, French, Normandian, Burgundian, Parisian, Provençal, were only dialects of the common French tongue, and that the dialects spoken in the countries between Apulia and Spain all belonged to the common Latin stock. It was necessary that the Latins should possess a short and concise treatise on other languages, especially on Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic, to serve as an introductory manual to the grammar of their own (Latin) language; not only because all knowledge possessed by the Latins was borrowed from books written in those idioms, but because the Latin language itself was based upon those tongues.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Greek Grammar, quoted by Emile Charles, *Roger Bacon, Sa vie et ses ouvrages*, p. 263 [and since published under the title of: *The Greek Grammar of Roger Bacon, and a fragment of his Hebrew Grammar, edited from the MSS., with Introduction and Notes by the Rev. Edmond Nolan, B.A., and S. A. Hirsch, Ph.D.*, Cambridge, 1902, q.v., p. 27].

<sup>2</sup> *Opus Tertium*, xxv. p. 88: “Transeo igitur ad partem tertiam in Opere Majori et illa est de linguis, seu de utilitate grammaticae, secundum linguas praecipue tres, scilicet, Hebraeum, Graecum, et Latinam. De Arabica tango locis suis. . . . In prima ostendo quod necesse est Latinos habere tractatum brevem et utilem de linguis alienis quo utantur, et quae deberet esse prima pars grammaticae, quia totum studium Latinorum dependet a linguis alienis, et etiam ipsa lingua Latina.”—*Ibid.*, p. 90: “. . . idioma est proprietas alicujus linguae distincta ab alia; ut Picardium et Gallicum, et Provinciale, et omnia idiomata a finibus Apuliae usque ad fines Hispaniae. Nam lingua Latina est in his omnibus una et eadem, secundum substantiam, sed variata secundum idiomata diversa.”—*Compendium Studii Philosophiae*, vi. p. 438: “Chaldaeus enim sermo et

The want of books, which was so serious a drawback to Reuchlin, was a much greater impediment in the case of Bacon. Both the one and the other sought far and wide to unearth the works they wanted for their investigations. Reuchlin particularly deplored the impossibility of obtaining Cabbalistical and Talmudical works. He even suggested that the Jews should be compelled to lend books, on good security, for the purposes of learned research, till the universities should have obtained books of their own by printing, or by the purchase of MSS.; and he declared that he would be willing to pay twice over the price of a copy of the Talmud. Bacon complains of the want of books in even stronger terms than Reuchlin; but then his needs were greater, on account of his multifarious scientific investigations; besides books he wanted instruments, diagrams, tables, and other scientific appliances on a large scale. He says that the most indispensable books, such as the works of Aristotle and Avicenna, of Seneca and Cicero, could not be obtained without spending a fortune. He had searched for books in every nook and corner with only occasional success. Besides, there were only few people who knew such books, or who knew how to select, out of the infinite mass, that which was really needful. The consequence was that no comprehensive, special treatises ("scripta principalia

Hebraeus differunt sicut idiomata unius linguae; ut Picardicum, et Normandicum, Burgundicum, Parisiense, et Gallicum, una enim lingua est omnium, scilicet Gallica. . . ."—*Opus Majus*, iii. vol. i. p. 66, Bridges.

de sapientia philosophiae") could be composed, nor could any defects and errors in the Latin texts be detected. Prelates and princes would have to come to the rescue.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Opus Tertium*, x. p. 34: "... oportet habere libros aliarum linguarum plurimos, scilicet de grammatica, et textus singularum partium philosophiae, ut viderentur defectus et falsitates in codicibus Latinorum. Sed hi libri . . . non possunt procurari sine principibus et praelatis."—*Ibid.*, xi. p. 35 sq.: "... nam sine instrumentis mathematicis nihil potest sciri, et instrumenta haec non sunt facta apud Latinos, et non fierent pro ducentis libris, nec trecentis. Adbuc autem sunt tabulae meliores . . . et hae tabulae valerent thesaurum unius regis. . . Et saepe aggressus sum compositionem istarum tabularum, sed non potui consummare propter defectum expensarum, et stultitiam eorum cum quibus habeo facere. . . Deinde sunt alia instrumenta et tabulae geometricae practicae, et arithmeticae practicae, et musicae, quae sunt utilitatis magnae; et necessario requiruntur."—*Ibid.*, xv. p. 55: "Sed libri istius scientiae Aristotelis et Avicennae, Senecae et Tulli, et aliorum, non possunt haberi nisi cum magnis expensis; tum quia principales libri non sunt translati in Latinum, tum quia aliorum non reperitur exemplar in studiis solemnibus, nec alibi; quia libri Marci Tulli *De Republica* optimi nusquam inveniuntur, quod ego possum audire, cum tamen sollicitus fui quaerere per diversas partes mundi, et per diversos mediatores. Similiter sunt multi alii libri ejus. Libros vero Senecae, quorum flores vestrae beatitudini conscripsi, nusquam potui invenire, nisi a tempore mandati vestri, quamvis diligens fui in hac parte jam a viginti annis et pluribus. Et sic est de multis aliis utilissimis libris istius scientiae nobilis. Paucissimi etiam sunt qui sciunt hujusmodi libros, nec sunt exercitati hic, nec scirent ex infinita multitudine colligere quae necessaria sunt, nec collecta ordinare."—*Ibid.*, xvi. p. 56: "... et recitavi difficultatem habendi istas, tum propter raritatem personarum quae sciunt de his, tum propter raritatem librorum, tum propter expensas varias in personis, in libris, in instrumentis, in tabulis, in operibus sapientiae magnis, in experientiis secretis. Et ideo patet quod scripta principalia de sapientia philosophiae non possunt fieri ab uno homine nec a pluribus, nisi manus praelatorum et principum juvent sapientiae cum magna virtute."

Bacon's prospects of seeing the evil remedied were smaller than those of Reuchlin in another respect also. In Reuchlin's time the art of printing had been invented, and the multiplication of books, once they were obtained or written, was comparatively easy. But in Bacon's age of MSS. the obstacles were almost insurmountable. How much parchment, Bacon says, and how many copyists were required, and how many proof copies had to be prepared before one copy could be produced in a finished form so as to stand the final test! Many assistants were required, the merely mechanical work had to be entrusted to a number of lads, and many readers must be employed to purge the text from errors; inspectors were needed to prevent the copyists from committing frauds, and to superintend and account for the expenses. He had himself attempted to make provisions in this direction, by means of useful collections and the training of young men to such work, and had spent more than two thousand livres on such preparations, and on experiments and the acquisition of instruments and tables.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Opus Tertium*, xi. p. 36: "Nam primo oportet facere instrui pueros decem vel duodecim in canonibus et tabulis astronomiae vulgatis, &c."—*Ibid.*, xvi. p. 57 sqq.: "...exigerentur pergamenum infinitum, et scriptores multi, ut multa fierent exemplaria, antequam unum haberetur ultimum. . . . Oportet manus multiplicari, et scripturas varias consumi, antequam habeatur exemplar unum limatum et ultima examinatione probatum. Nam tractatus sufficiens debet habere septem condiciones. . . . Et hae septem condiciones non possunt fieri nisi multa fiant exemplaria, et destructio pergamenti ineffabilis. Iterum, cum omnia verificantur et certificantur per figuras et numeros, ut patet ex operibus quae mitto,



Bacon was thus under the necessity of creating for himself such opportunities as are deemed the first requisites by all intending students. He had hardly any resources, except such as were of his own making; and this was the case just as much in his scientific researches as in his philological studies.

As to the means by which he sought to master the Greek and Hebrew languages, they were the same as those used by Reuchlin. Both Bacon and Reuchlin were of opinion that there was no better plan than learning Greek from the Greeks and Hebrew from the Jews. Reuchlin, when staying at Basel, grasped the opportunity of learning Greek from Andronicus Contablacas, a born Greek. As envoy to the court of the Emperor Maximilian, he became acquainted with Jacob Jehiel Loans, the Jewish body physician of the emperor, who became his first teacher in Hebrew. At a later period, when at Rome, Reuchlin obtained instruction in Hebrew from Rabbi Obadiah Sforno, who was a classical scholar, a physician, a philosopher,

*oportet quod multi sint collaterales et adjutores, et maxime juvenes qui figurent et numerent; nam seniores tædio afficerentur talibus operibus puerilibus. Atque correctores varios oportet haberi, qui omnia scripta prævia vice corrigant, ad exemplaria ultimata, donec artifices principales perlegerent omnia, ut nihil esset superfluum, nihil diminutum. Et plures oportet haberi qui præessent fraudibus scriptorum, et qui rationem redderent et facerent expensarum.*—*Ibid.*, xvii. p. 59: "Nam per viginti annos quibus specialiter laboravi in studio sapientiæ, neglecto sensu vulgi, plus quam duo millia librarum ego posui in his, propter ibros secretos, et tabulas, et alia; tum ad quaerendum amicitias sapientium, tum propter instruendos adjutores in linguis, in figuris, in numeris, in tabulis, in instrumentis, et multis aliis."



and a Cabbalist. It was in the same way that Bacon obtained a knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, by taking instruction from Greeks and Jews. He declared "that Jews were to be found everywhere, and that their language was substantially the same as Arabic and Chaldaean. There were besides people in Paris, in France (*sic*), and in other countries whose knowledge was sufficient for this purpose. Greek accorded greatly with Latin, and there were many persons in England and France who knew enough of that language. There were many places in Italy where the clergy and the population were purely Greek, and it would be worth while to go there for information. Prelates and wealthy people should send thither for books and teachers, after the example set by Robert Grosseteste."<sup>1</sup>

We do not know whether/Bacon's intercourse with Jews constituted a count in the indictment, on the strength of which, it is said, he was condemned and thrown into prison.<sup>2</sup> We know how much Reuchlin had to suffer for similar conduct;

<sup>1</sup> *Compendium Studii Philosophiae*, vi. p. 434: "Doctores autem non desunt; quia ubique sunt Hebraei, et eorum lingua est eadem in substantia cum Arabica et Chaldaea, licet in modo differant. Suntque homines Parisius, et in Francia, et ulterius in omnibus regionibus, qui de his sciunt quantum necesse fuerit in hac parte. Graecum vero maxime concordat cum Latino; et sunt multi in Anglia et Francia qui hic satis instructi sunt. Nec multum esset pro tanta utilitate ire in Italiam, in qua clerus et populus sunt pure Graeci in multis locis; et episcopatus, et archiepiscopatus, et divites ac seniores possent ibi mittere pro libris, et pro uno vel pluribus qui scirent Graecum; sicut dominus Robertus, sanctus episcopus Lincolniensis, solebat facere."

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Mr. Bridges' Introduction to the *Opus Majus*, p. xxxi.

how he was upbraided with not sufficiently hating the Jews. Bacon was certainly guilty of the same offence. In the face of such zeal as he displayed for the conversion of all mankind to the faith of his Church, for the annihilation of all those whose conversion would be impossible, and for the early disappearance of the Mahommedan religion, it is noteworthy that not a single expression is found in his writings disparaging to the Jews of his time. It need not be said that he extolled the superiority of Christianity over the religion of the Jews;<sup>1</sup> but, even from his standpoint, he maintained the infinitely higher claims of Judaism over those of any other religion. There is a total absence of *odium theologicum* in his discussion as regards the Jewish religion, and no trace of any bitterness against the Jews. He must have known many of them; he made use of them in his Hebrew studies, and says that they were to be found everywhere, yet not a single insulting epithet escapes him. He goes even so far as to deprecate any attempt to convert them. Theoretically, he believed, of course, in their ultimate conversion to Christianity, but he was quite content to relegate such consummation till after the [conversion of all the rest of mankind], quoting the New Testament in support of this view. But he considered that time to be still distant. "There were many nations still steeped in paganism, and there were pagans whose territories were not so remote from Paris as Paris was from Rome, and they inhabited countries larger

<sup>1</sup> *Opus Majus*, vii. vol. ii. p. 566 *sqq.*, Bridges.

than Germany, France, and Spain.”<sup>1</sup> More than that, he has even a good word to say for the Jews who lived at the time of the birth of Christianity, and who used to be held up by Christians of all shades of opinion as the worst criminals on earth, whose actions were relentlessly visited, and are being visited still, upon their descendants. He says that “there were at the time of the crucifixion many holy and good men among the Jews; and, nevertheless, they all rejected the Lord, except his mother, and John, and the Marys; nay, it is even said that nobody really believed in him except his mother.”<sup>2</sup> This judgment about the Jews at the time of the crucifixion, as

<sup>1</sup> *Compendium Studii Philosophiae*, i. p. 402 sq.: “. . . aut praeveniet unus beatissimus papa, qui omnes corruptiones tollet de studio, et ecclesia, et caeteris, et renovetur mundus, et intret plenitudo gentium, et reliquiae Israel ad fidem convertantur. Quoniam Apostolus constituit Judaeis convertendi terminum in conversione plenitudinis gentium, dicens ad Romanos xi. [25]: ‘Cum intraverit plenitudo gentium, tum reliquiae Israel salvificent,’ . . . nondum tamen adimpletum est. . . . Sicut nos scimus, non solum a longe sed prope nos, regiones maris esse quae in puro paganismo adhuc remanent, quibus nunquam fuit praedicatum, nec legem Dei receperunt. . . . Et non distat principium terrarum illarum a Parisiis, nisi quantum Roma; et sunt majora regna quam Allemanniae et Franciae et Hispaniae. . . .”

<sup>2</sup> *Opus Tertium*, ix. p. 28: “Certe multi fuerunt sancti et boni inter Judaeos quando transfixus est Dominus, et tamen omnes dimiserunt eum, praeter matrem suam, et beatum Johannem, et Marias; et dicitur adhuc quod sola mater Dei fidem rectam habuit.”—Should the contents of the Toulouse MS. be brought home to Bacon, his intercourse with Jews would prove to have been still more intimate, for, in that case, he would, like Renschlin, have corresponded with Jews in the Hebrew language. *Vid.* S. Berger, *l.c.*, p. 39.

[illegible]

*[Faint handwritten Latin text from folio 89v]*

[illegible]

Fac-Simile of a page from the Cottonian MS of Roger Bacon's "Opus Majus" (i).



uttered by the mouth of a Christian theologian, is unique; and we should have no reason to be surprised if such sentiments of tolerance towards the Jews had weighed heavily in the scales of those who, we are told, brought about his condemnation.

Bacon understood perfectly well that neither every Jew nor every Greek, although acquainted with his own language, was, therefore, competent to impart scientific instruction.

"We see," he says, "many laymen who speak Latin very well, and yet have no notion of the grammatical rules of that language; the same is the case with almost all the Jews and real Greeks, let alone the Latins who know Greek and Hebrew. Only very few of the former class are able to teach grammar efficiently and in a methodical and rational manner, as we Latins are able to do by means of Priscian's books. We must, therefore, look out for men who have a scholarly knowledge of those languages, but this would entail great expense."<sup>1</sup>

Bacon was reasonable enough not to expect that every student would acquire the same knowledge of languages. He carefully marks out the limits to be reached, and classifies the proficiency attainable under three heads.

<sup>1</sup> *Opus Tertium*, x. p. 34: "Vidimus enim multos laicos, qui optime loquebantur Latinum, et tamen nihil sciverunt de regulis grammaticae; et sic est modo de omnibus Hebraeis fere, et similiter de Graecis veris, non solum de Latinis qui sciunt Graecum et Hebraeum . . . ita quod paucissimi eorum sciunt docere grammaticam veraciter, cum causis et rationibus reddendis, sicut nos Latini scimus per libros Prisciani . . . Oportet igitur primo habere homines peritos in linguis alienis, et hi haberi non possunt sine magnis expensis."



"I do not mean to say that every one should completely master the learned languages, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, and Chaldaean, and know them as he knows his mother tongue; as we speak English, French, and Latin. I do not even demand the student to be proficient enough to be able to translate scientific books from such languages into his (Latin) mother tongue. It is better to be satisfied with a third degree of knowledge, which could be easily acquired under a proper teacher. It is enough for us to master so much Greek and Hebrew as to read and to know the accidentence, according to the theory of Donatus. Once this is learned and a proper method followed, the construing and understanding of the words become easy."<sup>1</sup>

Bacon considers it advisable not to attempt more; because people, when aspiring to the first and the second degree of linguistic knowledge, will despair, and never reach even the third degree. "If a person were to apply himself diligently from his youth for thirty years, he might attain all three

<sup>1</sup> *Compendium Studii Philosophiae*, vi. p. 433 sq.: "Prima igitur est scientia linguarum sapientialium a quibus tota Latinorum sapientia translata est; cujusmodi sunt Graecum, Hebraeum, Arabicum, et Chaldaeum. Non tamen intelligo ut quilibet sciat has linguas sicut maternam in qua natus est, ut nos loquimur Anglicum, Gallicum, et Latinum; nec ut sciamus tantum de his linguis ut quilibet fiat interpres, et transferre possit in linguam maternam Latinam scientiam de linguis illis. Sed tertius gradus hic eligendus est, qui facillimus est habenti doctorem, scilicet ut sciamus de his quantum sufficit ad intelligendum quae requirit Latinatis in hac parte. Et vis hujus rei stat in hoc; ut homo sciat legere Graecum, et Hebraeum, et caetera. Et ut secundum formam Donati sciat accidentia partium orationis. Nam his notis, constructio et intellectus vocabulorum linguarum illarum, quantum Latinis sufficit, de facili habentur per modos quos inferius assignabo."

degrees, or, at least, the two last degrees; for it is the first degree which offers all the difficulty, as we, who tried it, know by experience.”<sup>1</sup>

This statement of Bacon's, that thirty years' close application to the study of languages was required to master them, curiously contrasts with his notions as to the time necessary to obtain the lowest degree of proficiency. There is certainly a great difference between thirty years and three days; and yet the latter is all that Bacon demands for the acquisition of the lowest degree. He says that, although he had himself devoted forty years to study, he was, nevertheless, certain to be able to impart the results of his investigations to a studious and earnest person in less than six months, provided he had first composed a compendium. He could teach such a student, within three days, enough Hebrew to enable him to read and understand all that had been written by the saints and ancient sages, in elucidation, correction, and exposition of the sacred text. But the student would have to follow the prescribed method. In another three days he would know as much Greek; so that he would be able to read and understand everything pertaining to theology,

<sup>1</sup> *Compendium Studii Philosophiae*, vi. p. 434: “Stulti enim homines et imperiti quum audiunt loqui de scientia linguarum, aestimant se obligari primo gradui et secundo, et ideo desperant et contemnunt tertium gradum facillimum; quamvis si considerarent et diligentes essent a juventute, etiam post triginta annos possent pertingere ad omnes gradus dictos, et saltem ad secundum cum tertio. Nam tota difficultas consistit in primo gradu; ut nos qui talibus insistimus experimur.”

philosophy, and the Latin language.<sup>1</sup> The possibility of teaching Hebrew in three days is, at first sight, altogether unlike Bacon's other estimate, and differs also greatly from that of Reuchlin, who declared that the student commenced to master Hebrew only at the moment when he reached the stage of despair, and was on the point of throwing up the study as an impossible task. But the two notions can be easily reconciled; and Bacon's view, that thirty years were required, is perhaps more pessimistic than that of Reuchlin. He defines

<sup>1</sup> *Opus Tertium*, xx. p. 65: "Multum laboravi in scientiis et linguis, et posui jam quadraginta annos postquam didici primo alphabetum; et praeter duos annos de istis quadraginta fui semper in studio, et habui expensas multas, sicut alii communiter; et tamen certus sum quod infra quartum anni, aut dimidium anni, ego docerem ore meo hominem sollicitum et confidentem, quicquid scio de potestate scientiarum et linguarum, dummodo composuissem primo quiddam scriptum sub compendio. . . . Sed certum est mihi quod infra tres dies ego quemcunque diligentem et confidentem docerem Hebraeum, ut sciret legere et intelligere quicquid sancti dicunt, et sapientes antiqui, in expositione sacri textus, et quicquid pertinet ad illius correctionem et expositionem, si vellet exercitare secundum doctrinam datam. Et per tres dies sciret de Graeco iterum; et non solum sciret legere et intelligere quicquid pertinet ad theologiam, sed ad philosophiam et ad linguam Latinam. Nam consideret vestra sapientia quod in linguarum cognitione sunt tria; scilicet ut homo sciat legere et intelligere ea, quae Latini tractant in expositione theologiae et philosophiae et linguae Latinae. Et hoc est facile. . . . Sed aliud est in linguarum cognitione, scilicet ut homo sit ita peritus ut quod sciat transferre. . . . Tertium vero est difficilius utroque, scilicet quod homo loquatur linguam alienam sicut suam; et doceat, et praedicet, et peroret quaecunque sicut in lingua materna. De istis igitur duobus non loquor modo, sed de primo. . . ."

clearly how much, or rather, how little knowledge three days' application could supply. It is the sort of Hebrew knowledge that was probably possessed by Bede and Alcuin; just enough to rescue the student from stumbling when, in the commentaries of the Bible, especially those of Jerome, he came across some exposition based on a derivation from the Hebrew.

In reference to the extent of Bacon's actual knowledge of Hebrew, we must consider two classes of evidence: firstly, his declaration of his own proficiency; and, secondly, those passages in his works in which he alludes to matters connected with Hebrew. If we were only to consult the evidence derived from the latter source, as presented now in his printed works, we might feel inclined to form a very low estimate indeed of the amount of his Hebrew learning. Bacon's quotations in reference to Hebrew are hardly any of them original; they are for the most part explanations of passages taken from Jerome and others. On the other hand, we cannot by any means be sure that the MSS. have preserved everything that Bacon may have said on the subject. The transcribers did not greatly relish copying Hebrew, or even Greek. They simply omitted, as a rule, the passages which they were unable to understand, and which did not interest the people by whom they were employed, who were mostly as ignorant of Hebrew as themselves. Thus the important passage in the third book of the *Opus Majus*, containing the Hebrew and Greek alphabets, with interlineary transliteration and explanatory remarks, is,

as far as known, extant only in two MSS.;<sup>1</sup> the others simply omit it. But why speak of transcribers when even Jebb, in his edition of the *Opus Majus*, omitted the whole passage, although he had the very MS. before him from which it was first edited by Mr. Bridges—and that incompletely. Many other passages of the greatest value for gauging Bacon's extent of knowledge of Hebrew may thus have become lost; and nobody can say with certainty that he never wrote the Hebrew Grammar mentioned among the works attributed to him.<sup>2</sup>

But the little we do possess bears ample testimony that Bacon had sufficient knowledge of Hebrew to satisfy his own demands of a third-rate, and even of a second-rate, Hebrew scholar. He clearly understands what he is about, when explaining derivations of words from the Hebrew, or exposing blunders made by other scholars, and he speaks with undoubted authority and knowledge of the subject. He has added nothing to the stock of information, there is not a single observation of his which can be called original; but there is enough to

<sup>1</sup> In the Cottonian MS. in the British Museum (Julius D.V.), and in another MS. in the Vatican, of which the learned editor of the latest edition of the *Opus Majus*, Mr. John Henry Bridges, possesses an excellent photographic copy. Mr. Bridges kindly allowed me to collate from that copy, which contains a portion of the *Opus Majus*, the passages in question. Mr. Bridges did not have that MS. before him when editing the *Opus Majus*, and he intends to re-edit this portion, many passages of which are much more correctly given in the Vatican MS. than in any other. [Since edited as a supplementary volume to his edition of the *Opus Majus*.]

<sup>2</sup> Pitseus. Bâle. [See *The Greek Grammar*, &c., *ut supra*, p. 43.]



show that Dr. Steinschneider's observation about the absence of evidence in Bacon's works of any direct knowledge of Hebrew is unfounded.<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, his observations show him to have been a tolerable Hebrew scholar.

To give a few instances. It is only in consequence of his intimate acquaintance with the Hebrew text of the Bible that Bacon was saved from falling into the error, committed by "all theologians," as to the meaning of an observation of Jerome's. "All theologians" were under the impression that the Lamentations of Jeremiah were written in the Chaldaean language. The cause of the error was Jerome's remark that one *pericope* of Jeremiah was written in Chaldaean. The word *pericope* bears the meaning of a *small part*, and the Lamentations being the smaller of Jeremiah's works, they thought that this was alluded to by Jerome. But Bacon, from his acquaint-

<sup>1</sup> M. Steinschneider, in H. Brody's *Zeitschrift für Hebräische Bibliographie*, i. p. 53. Steinschneider cites an article by Dr. J. Guttman in the *Monatsschrift für die Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums*, Breslau, 1896, p. 323. Guttman confined himself to the consideration of the passages in Bacon's works relating to the Jewish Calendar, for which the latter had an unbounded admiration. The table which he composed, *Hebraicis literis*, and inserted in the *Opus Majus* (vid. *Opus Tertium*, pp. 215, 220; cf. *O. M.*, vol. i. p. 208, note, Bridges), has, it seems, not been preserved. The *Liber Febrium*, by Isaac Israeli, quoted in the *Opus Majus* (vol. i. p. 246, Bridges), and in the *Epistola de Secretis Operibus Artis et Naturae et de Nullitate Magiae* (p. 532, Brewer), and Gabirol's *Fons Vitae*, quoted by Bacon without the author's name (Charles, p. 324), were neither of them originally written in Hebrew, and were known to Bacon from Latin translations.



ance with the text of the Hebrew Bible, was able to explain that Jerome's remark applied to one verse only (Jer. x. 11). Bacon gives the verse in full in the original Chaldaean, adds a Hebrew translation, and supplies both with interlineary transliteration and Latin translation.<sup>1</sup>

Bacon gives the Hebrew alphabet, with the names of the

<sup>1</sup> *Compendium Studii Philosophiae*, vi. p. 438: "Pono exemplum de prologo Daniel, in quo beatus Hieronymus dicit quod una pericope Hieremiae scribitur sermone Chaldaico, sed tamen Hebraicis literis exaratur; quod omnes theologi intelligunt esse librum Threnorum, et ita exponunt prologum illum, decepti vilissima et ficta auctoritate Britonis, cujus expositione omnes in prologis Bibliae abutuntur. Auctoritate igitur nulla docti dicunt *pericope* Graece est parva particula Latine, et libellus Threnorum parvus est respectu majoris voluminis Hieremiae. Sed hic error intolerabilis est. Nam libellus Threnorum, ut omnes Hebraei sciunt, sicut scribitur literis Hebraeis, sic sermo Hebraeus est. . . . Deinde testantibus omnibus Hebraeis Latinis inueniemus illam particulam in decimo capitulo libri magni Hieremiae, ubi dicitur in Latino: 'Sic igitur dicetis eis, Dii qui coelum et terram non fecerunt, pereant de terra et his quae sub coelo sunt.' Haec parva particula est illa de qua Hieronymus dicit, ut omnes Hebraei sciunt; quia proculdubio literis Hebraicis scribitur. Sed sermo est Chaldaeus."—Similarly in the *Opus Majus*, pars iii. Both the Cottonian and the Vatican MSS., after the description of the Hebrew alphabet, proceed thus: Et sic invenitur hic in hoc Hebraeo quod sequitur: Chidenah  
כרנה &c.—the whole verse, with transliteration and translation, and the note, "Litera Hebraica Sermo Chaldaeus." This is followed by the Hebrew translation (with transliteration, Latin translation, and the note "Litera Hebraica Sermo Hebraeus"), thus: כה תאמרו להם אלהיהם (sic) אשר שמים וארץ לא עשו יאבדו מארץ ומתחת שמים אלה. In the Cottonian MS. the words are in irregular order, the Vatican MS. reproduces them correctly, except that the word אלה is omitted. The passage is omitted in Mr. Bridges' edition [but it has been added in the Supplementary Volume]. Cf. S. Berger, *l.c.*, p. 39.

letters and their equivalent sounds. He describes the ordinary and final letters, with terms answering to the expressions פתוחה, סתומה, כפופה, and פשוטה.<sup>1</sup> There is only the ש, but the subsequent passages show that Bacon was fully aware of the difference between Shin and Sin. He calls the letters *aleph, ain, he, heth, iot, vaf*, vowels, and describes their sounds, quoting Jerome for his authority. In describing the vowel-points he renders the kametz as *linea cum puncto* —, and thus we find it in all old MSS. Of the semi-vowels he only mentions the ך, omitting the ם —which, however, occurs subsequently— and the ן. He briefly mentions the signs for *dagesh* and *rapheh*, and observes that ך sounds like *z* “ut cum dico *adamas*,” and ך “ut cum dico *dabo*,” but he does not explain the difference of pronunciation of the other letters of בנרכפת, when written with or without the *dagesh lene*, although he seems to allude elsewhere to difference of pronunciation between כ and כּ.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Bridges points out<sup>3</sup> that Bacon's scheme of trans-

<sup>1</sup> In the Cottonian MS. of the *Opus Majus*, the Norman-French terms “uverte” and “close” (פתוחה and סתומה) are used in the case of מ and ם; the ך and ן are described as “nun draite” (dreite), “sazike draite” (פשוטה); the נ and צ are marked as “torte” (כפופה), the כ and ך, פ and ף are without any distinguishing mark. In the Vatican MS. the מ, ם, ך, ן, צ and ן are described as “uverte,” “clase” (*sic*), “dreite,” and “torte.” All this will be more fully explained in my notes to a fragment by Bacon on Hebrew grammar, to be published shortly. [Since published, *ut supra*, p. 203, n. 5.]

<sup>2</sup> *Opus Minus*, p. 351 : “. . . et c nostrum valet caph eorum, nisi quod debet asperari c nostrum, sicut *Sesach*.”

<sup>3</sup> Introduction, p. l.

literation and pronunciation of the Greek was altogether in accordance with modern Greek, and that the cause of this must be found in the fact that he not improbably learned the language from one of the Greeks who had been invited into England by Grosseteste. This opens up some interesting questions, not only in reference to the pronunciation of Greek, but also to that of Hebrew, and to the mode in which Latin was pronounced in those days by English scholars.

It is remarkable that the cases of Roger Bacon and of Reuchlin are parallel on all three points. It is evident that Bacon, in teaching Greek, made use of that style of pronunciation which has since received the name of *Itacism*, and which is commonly called the Reuchlinian pronunciation. But if Bacon's seeds had fallen on more fruitful ground, it would have been known as the Baconian mode of pronouncing Greek, in distinction from the *Etacism*, introduced by Erasmus. Again, in regard to the pronunciation of Hebrew, Reuchlin introduced the one which he had learned from Italian Jews, and which mostly corresponds with the one in use among the Sephardic Jews, as distinct from the style in vogue among the Ashkenazim. The former has since become the mode in which Hebrew is pronounced at the European universities. It is not here the place to dwell on the origin of that difference of pronunciation, and to compare it with the way in which Arabic, Aramaic, and other dialects belonging to the Semitic stock were formerly spoken. But one thing is certain; if Bacon had, like Reuchlin,

succeeded in interesting his contemporaries in the study of Hebrew, the Christian scholars in Europe would have been led into the same direction by Bacon as they were led, at a later period, by Reuchlin ; for Bacon says that both the *pathach* and the *kametz* were to be pronounced as *a*, and the *cholem* as *o*. He transliterates א, א, א, א, and א, into *ba*, *be*, *bi*, *bo*, *bu*, &c. Once only the letters ך and ם are given in the Cottonian MS., as *heis* and *teis*, in all other cases they are described as *cheth* and *teth*, and we always find *bet* and *tav*. It is greatly to be regretted that the Hebrew grammar, which Bacon is said to have written, is not now extant<sup>1</sup>—if it ever existed ; but by comparing the various passages bearing on this subject in Bacon's printed works, it becomes evident that his knowledge of these matters was derived, partly from instruction received from Jews, and partly from Jerome's commentaries. It appears that the Jews consulted by him must have used the so-called Sephardic pronunciation. An investigation into the mode of pronouncing Hebrew by the Jews of England before the expulsion might be worth the trouble.

Bacon's pronunciation of Latin was evidently the one common on the Continent. If the English scholars of those days, when reading or speaking Latin, gave the vowels the sounds they have in modern English, it is clear that Bacon did not follow their example. His transliterations of Greek and

<sup>1</sup> [See, however, *The Greek Grammar of Roger Bacon*, &c. (*ut supra*), p. 199 sqq.]

Hebrew show that he gave the vowels the value they had, and still have, on the Continent. He says that the letter *iot* (י), when it is a vowel only, sounded “*sicut i nostrum*.” He transcribes the *pathach* and the *kametz* by the letter *a*, the *segol*, *tsere*, and even the *shva* and *chatuph segol* by the letter *e*, and observes that the vowels have the sounds “*quinque vocalium ‘nostrarum’ a, e, i, o, u,*” implying the sounds these letters have abroad. It is possible that all English scholars spoke their Latin in the same way.

If, however, Latin vowels were sounded in England as those of the vernacular, it is clear that Bacon discarded the local pronunciation and adopted the foreign one, in the same way as Reuchlin exchanged the local German mispronunciation for the more correct Italian. For, when Reuchlin was still quite a young man, it happened that papal nuncios arrived at the court of the Margrave Frederick, and when they came to take their leave and to receive their despatches, they were addressed by the high chancellor, a native of Hechingen, who spoke Latin after the abominable pronunciation of his district. He began his oration, but the Italians could not understand him, and refused to receive this as a despatch. In this embarrassment some one remembered that Reuchlin, who was then the chancellor’s amanuensis, could speak pure Latin. He was called, and carried on the conversation in the style he had learned during his travels. Thus the cases of Bacon and Reuchlin seem to be parallel in this instance also.

Bacon's references to Hebrew, although showing no originality, yet prove that he spoke with a full knowledge of the subject; and his acquaintance with the Hebrew text of the Bible becomes apparent in his illustrations of comments made by older scholars. A curious instance is the way he exposes a blunder of Pope Gregory the Great, already alluded to. Pope Gregory, in his commentary on the Book of Job, is rather puzzled by the name given by Job to one of his three daughters, born after the latter's restoration to health and wealth. He quotes Job xlii. 14 thus: "And he called the name of one, Dies; and the name of the second, Casia; and the name of the third, Cornustibii." These are meant to be the renderings of the Hebrew names Jemima, Keziah, and Keren-Happuch (קִרְנֵי הַפִּיחַ, קִצְעָה, יְמִימָה), and Gregory considered Cornustibii (=Cornus tibii) to be the compound of two words denoting certain musical instruments, something like "trumpet-fife," and observes that "the translator appropriately took care not to insert them as they are found in the Arabic language, but to show their meaning more plainly when translated in the Latin tongue. For who can be ignorant that Dies and Casia are Latin words? But in Cornustibii (though it is not *cornus* but *cornu*, and the pipe of the singers is called not *tibium* but *tibia*) I suppose he preferred, without keeping the gender of the word in the Latin tongue, to state the thing as it is, and to preserve the peculiarity of that language from which he was translating. Or because he compounded one word out of the two (*cornu*



and *tibia*), he was at liberty to call both words, which are translated into Latin by one part of speech, whatever gender he likes."

Bacon<sup>1</sup> alludes to this passage, and says that it was clear to any one able to compare the original Hebrew, that the text used by the Pope was corrupt; that the second part of the compound word was not *tibii* but *stibii*; and that the name of Job's daughter was Cornu Stibii, meaning a horn or receptacle of stibium, and not the monstrosity Cornustibii (trumpet-fife). Bacon correctly traces the etymology of the name from the Hebrew, and adds that the term used here for stibium (פִּיךְ) was the same as 2 Kings ix. 30, where we are told that Jezebel dyed her eyes with stibium. If Brito

<sup>1</sup> *Compendium Studii Philosophiae*, vi. p. 440: "Cum igitur beatus Gregorius in fine Job, loquens de tertia filia ejus, exposuerit 'Cornus tibii,' licet videatur ei quod *cornus* non fuisset Latinum nec *tibium* similiter, sed sic inveniens in exemplari suo, non ausus fuit immutare, propter textus sacri reverentiam et propter ejus summam humilitatem; cum illi qui modo solliciti sunt de veritate textus Dei, et qui sciunt Graecum et Hebraeum, possunt docere sine contradictione, quod exemplar beati Gregorii fuit corruptum, aut vitiose . . . ut dicatur *cornus tibii*, cum tamen deberet dici *cornu stibii*. . . . Et sanctus homo forsitan multis occupatus non habuit tempus examinandi plura exemplaria, nec quid in Graeco vel Hebraico scriberentur. Nam in Hebraeo est *cornu stibii*, id est cornu plenum stibio, secundum glossam Hebraicam; sicut vas aquae dicimus, id est, plenum aqua. Nam idem vocabulum ponitur hic pro stibio, et quarto Regum, nono capitulo, ubi dicitur quod Jezabel depinxit oculos suos stibio. . . . Sed tamen vulgus modernorum theologorum disputans de his, quae ignorat, nititur salvare expositionem beati Gregorii et dum Scyllam vitare nititur incidit in Charybdim."



which prove the latter derivation to be untenable. He explains that the circumstance that in Hebrew *Is* meant *man*, *Ra* = *seeing*, *El* = *God*, led those commentators to believe that the patriarch's name was a compound of these three words. But Jerome rightly objected to this derivation. For the name contained the five letters Iod, Sin, Resh, Aleph, Lamet, which made up the name *ישראל*, Israel. But the other compound would consist of eight letters, namely, Aleph, Iod, Sin, Resh, Aleph, He, Aleph, Lamet, making the word *אִשְׂרָאֵל*. Besides, he argues, these letters would make Iserael a word of four syllables, whereas the name has really only three, because a dot under a letter denoted the vowel *i*, two dots (tsere) *e*, and a stroke with a dot underneath *a*. But the strongest argument must be taken from the sense, which was explained in the verse itself. Bacon illustrates this further by reproducing the whole verse in Hebrew.<sup>1</sup> These arguments are set forth in the *Opus Majus*,

<sup>1</sup> *Opus Majus*, l.c., p. 82: "Nam apud Hebraeos *Is* est *vir*, *Ra* videns, *El* Deus; et ideo crediderunt multi quod hoc nomen patriarchae habet resolutionem in illa tria. Sed Hieronymus reprobat per multa argumenta . . . in nomine patriarchae sunt hae quinque literae per ordinem: Iod, Sin, Resh, Aleph, Lamet, sicut ipsum Hebraeum hic positum declarat *ישראל*, Israel. Sed in hoc triplici vocabulo hae octo literae habent hunc ordinem, scilicet, Aleph, Iod, Sin, Resh, Aleph, He, Aleph, Lamet, ut hic Hebraeum ostendit *אִשְׂרָאֵל*. Et quarto argui potest explicatione. Nam sicut puncta ostendunt nomen proprium non retinet apud Hebraeum sonum praecisum illorum vocabulorum. Nam secundum majorem quasi Iserael sonatur in quatuor syllabis, tamen ibi vocabulorum sonus in solis tribus syllabis coarctatur, quoniam punctum sub litera sonat *i*, et duo puncta sonant *e*, et linea cum puncto sub ea sonat *a*. Sed argumenta

and repeated in the *Compendium Studii Philosophiae*,<sup>1</sup> where Bacon modestly adds that a fuller explanation of this difficulty would carry him too far, and that, for the present, he was neither obliged nor competent to enter into all the niceties of Hebrew grammar connected with the question. I suppose he refers to the differences between *shva quiescens* and *shva mobile*, between ם and ן, &c.; but this very modesty shows all the more that he was not a mere transcriber of Jerome's remarks, and that his knowledge of Hebrew was quite sufficient to enable him to distinguish between the right and the wrong derivation.

Another instance of Bacon's competency is the way in which he explains the derivation of the name of Sisach = Babel, as given by Jerome, who himself followed the Rabbis. Bacon's words prove that he fully understood the transposition of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet after the scheme אה, בש, גר, דק, &c.<sup>2</sup>

fortiora trahuntur ex sensu vocis secundum Hieronymum. Et hoc ostendit ipsum Hebraeum hic scriptum hoc modo : ויאמר לא יעקב יאמר עוד : שמך כי אם ישראל כי שרית עם אלהים ועם אנשים ותוכל. In the Cottonian MS. the words of this verse also are jumbled up in a curious manner.

<sup>1</sup> *Compendium Studii Philosophiae*, vi. p. 436 : "Sed propter brevitatem transeo ; quia expositio plena hujus difficultatis requirit magnam notitiam Hebrae grammaticae, quantum ad praesens non debeo nec valeo explicare."

<sup>2</sup> *Opus Minus*, p. 350 : "Similiter cum Jeremias prophetavit contra Babel, non ausus fuit ponere hoc verbum, ne suscicaret furorem Chaldaeorum contra ipsum et populum Dei sed posuit *Sesach* pro Babel. Cujus nominis ratio nullo modo potest sciri, nisi homo sciat Alphabetum

It is unnecessary to give an exhaustive list of all the instances in Bacon's works in which his knowledge of Hebrew transpires. The seventh chapter of the *Compendium Studii Philosophiae* contains a list of words and names which used to be considered as being of Latin origin, but which are in reality derivations from the Hebrew. In some cases Bacon is at great pains to expose the absurdity of such views; as, for instance, in regard to the words *arrabon* and *Gehenna*, which Hugutius and Brito and "other idiotic grammarmongers" ("et aliae grammaticellae idiotae") explain as *arra bona*, and the Greek *ge* and *ennos*. In all these cases Bacon shows no originality, but he displays a complete knowledge of the subject. By far the greater part of his remarks refers to misunderstood explanations by other commentators, especially Jerome. Bacon's intimate acquaintance with the Hebrew text of the Bible is particularly conspicuous in a passage in the fourth book of the *Opus Majus*, in which he rectifies the innumerable errors of the Hebraeum. . . . Nam cum Babel scribatur per duo *Beth*, et unum *Lamet* punctuatur more Hebraeo (?) posuit propheta duo *Sin* pro duobus *Beth*, ut Chaldaei nomen ignorarent. Cum tamen omnis habere, videre, et dividere possit nominis rationem, quia more eorum est instruendo parvos, quod faciunt eos conjungere primam cum ultima, et secundum cum penultima; et sic ulterius usque ad duas medias simul positas, scilicet *Caph* secundum et *Lamet*. Et in his sic congeminitis utuntur una pro alia maxime, quum volunt aliquod secretum occultare. Et ideo cum *Sin* et *Beth* sint congeminata, ponit duo *Sin* pro duobus *Beth*, et eadem ratione pro *Lamet* posuit *Caph* secundum; et *S* nostrum valet eorum *Sin* in proposito; et *C* nostrum valet *Caph* eorum; nisi quod debet asperari *C* nostrum, sicut *Sesach*."

Paris text, especially in the matter of figures, *e.g.* that Arpachsad lived after the birth of Shelah 303 years instead of 403 years, or that Reu lived 35 years instead of 32, &c. The whole passage supplies, as Mr. Bridges justly observes, further illustrations of the corruption of the Paris text, and at the same time of the care with which Bacon had collated the Septuagint and the Hebrew text.<sup>1</sup>

Yet it seems that Bacon himself fell occasionally, however rarely, into errors of the same description. Thus he warns his readers not to confound Horeb, the mountain of God, with the stone Oreb in Raphidim from which Moses drew water; the former name being written with a Heth, but not the latter. But the latter name is also written with a ה (Exod. xvii. 6). Bacon evidently confused that rock with the rock of Oreb, צור עורב, of Judges vii. 25.<sup>2</sup>

It is strange that Bacon makes no mention whatever of the Hebrew accents, or the "tonic accents," as they are called.

<sup>1</sup> *Opus Majus*, vi. vol. i. p. 221, Bridges.

<sup>2</sup> *Opus Majus*, iv. vol. i. p. 327, Bridges: "Deinde magis versus orientem est desertum Sinai ubi est mons Dei Oreb . . . sed non est petra Oreb in Raphidim, de qua Moyses aquam eduxit. Nam Horeb pro monte Sina scribitur per Heth literam, sed Oreb non."—The passage, *Compend. Stud., phil.* 445, "Hieremias, Hierico, Hierusalem, Hieronymus et hujusmodi debent aspirari in principio," might lead us to suspect Bacon of having committed an error, such as he always relentlessly censures in others; for how comes the name of Hieronymus to be included in a list of names derived from the Hebrew? The sentence is, however, merely an abbreviated reproduction of the parallel passage in *Opus Tertium*, lxi. p. 247, and is hardly in its proper place here.



He treats fully on all subjects referring to accentuation, aspiration, punctuation, and prosody. He says that "the Hebrew text contains many kinds of metre, and complains that the Latin translators did not possess that musical power which was owned by the patriarchs and prophets. He says that the only way in which theologians could obtain a knowledge of Hebrew metres and rhythms was to recur to the Hebrew original."<sup>1</sup> And yet there is no evidence that Bacon was acquainted with the Hebrew accents. This is particularly astonishing considering that he was instructed in Hebrew by Jews, and that he had a thorough knowledge of the text of the Hebrew Bible. If Bacon had known the Hebrew accents and their values, we may be sure he would not have failed to mention them, in the same way as he enters fully into the subject of accents, metres, and rhythms of the Greek language. On the other hand, we must not lose sight of the fact that such matters, if referring to Hebrew, might have been suppressed by the copyists. The subject of the accentuation of Greek is treated in his Greek

<sup>1</sup> *Opus Majus*, iv. vol. i. p. 237, Bridges: "Item multa genera metrorum continentur in textu sacro Hebraico."—*Opus Tertium*, lxiv. p. 267: "Sed translatore Latini non habuerunt illam musicae potestatem, quam patriarchae et prophetae, qui omnes scientias adinvenerunt. Et ideo non remanserunt haec in textu Latinorum . . . ideo oportet theologum recurrere ad sapientiam Dei in Hebraeo, ut sciat ex ipso fonte haurire aquas sapientiae. Et cum ibi tradita est per vias musicae, metricae, et rhythmicae, necesse est quod perfectus theologus sciat rationem istarum partium musicae."

grammar, as yet unpublished,<sup>1</sup> but which is being edited now by the Reverend Father Nolan of Trinity College, Cambridge, and will appear shortly, and the Hebrew accents may have been described in the mysterious Hebrew grammar of his, which I feel inclined to believe that he really wrote, although no trace of evidence of the fact can be found in any of his printed works. If Bacon had succeeded in composing his "Scriptum Principale," more light would probably have been thrown on this question; for in the first volume he meant to deal with grammar and logic, and we know what a considerable factor Hebrew was to Bacon in his grammatical researches.

I am of opinion that the direct evidences of Bacon's knowledge of Hebrew contained in his works do less than justice to him. His own testimony as to his proficiency in that language cannot be lightly set aside. He describes himself as a zealous student of Hebrew who had studied the subject for a number of years. He declares<sup>2</sup> "that although he referred elsewhere to the Arabic language, yet he did not write it like Hebrew, Greek, and Latin." Bacon was not an idle boaster, and full credence is due to assertions of that kind. But his researches

<sup>1</sup> In connection with this Greek grammar, two small fragments by Bacon found in the University library at Cambridge, will be published; one, on Greek grammar, edited by the Rev. Father Nolan, and the other, on Hebrew grammar, edited by me. [Since published, *vid. supra*, p. 43 n.]

<sup>2</sup> *Opus Tertium*, xxv. p. 88: "De Arabico tango locis suis; sed nihil scribo Arabice, sicut Hebraee, et Latine."

in the field of Hebrew lore, like many of his discoveries in other branches of learning, died with him.<sup>1</sup> His admonitions as to the necessity and usefulness of pursuing this discipline remained unheeded, and two more centuries had to pass by before Johann Reuchlin succeeded in disclosing to European scholars the existence of a Hebrew and Rabbinical literature.

<sup>1</sup> He may have had a very apt pupil in the Englishman, Willermus de Mara, *vid.* Berger, *l.c.*, p. 32 *sq.* *Vid.* *ibid.*, p. 49 *sq.*, about a translation of the Bible from the original Hebrew, MSS. of portions of which are extant in Oxford and Cambridge, and which it would be premature to discuss here.

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## JOHANN PFEFFERKORN AND THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS

(1892)

THE 28th of September, 1509, was a day of consternation to the Jews of Frankfort-on-the-Main. They had probably risen on that morning with the expectation of spending a few days in rest and rejoicing, for it was the eve of the feast of Tabernacles. It was a busy day alike for Jews and Jewesses, for it was a Friday, and preparations had to be made both for the Sabbath and the festival. The men and boys were busily engaged in the fitting up and the decoration of the tabernacles, in the binding up of the *lulab* (palm-branch), and the selecting of the best *ethrog* (citron). The women had their domestic duties to attend to, to prepare the food, to arrange their trinkets and their finery, to see whether the holiday attire of their husbands, sons, and brothers was in good repair, whether here and there a stitch was not wanted, whether the yellow badge which every Jew was compelled to wear was properly fastened. The holiday feeling was all the keener for the oppression under which they were always bent; for they knew no tranquillity at home or abroad. They were assailed in the streets by insulting language, they were pelted and assaulted, not only by the young, but also

by grown-up people. They were confined to a narrow, dark street, which from their sufferings they used to call New Egypt. On the inner wall of the gate of the bridge leading into the town there was a picture in derision of the Jews, which roused against the inhabitants of the Ghetto the hatred and contempt of all passers by. Their right of domicile had to be renewed at short intervals—every three years, or even annually. This proved so profitable a business to the town that the conditions were constantly modified, and it was altogether a fertile source of oppression, extortion, and degrading restrictions. Thus, for example, in the year 1433 the Jews of Frankfort were forbidden to buy beef except in the four weeks between the 28th of October and the 25th of November. The rest, the enjoyment, the consolation afforded them by their religious holidays must, under such circumstances, have been all the more intensely felt, must have all the more keenly affected the inner recesses of their hearts, and have given them the courage again to encounter the innumerable slights and wrongs that met them in their daily life. They must have rejoiced, therefore, on this particular Friday at the prospect of a comparatively happy and quiet holiday, but they had counted without Johann Pfefferkorn.

On the day of which we speak there appeared in their synagogue three priests, two town councillors, and Johann Pfefferkorn. The latter produced a mandate of the Emperor Maximilian, to the effect that the Jews should deliver to him, Pfefferkorn, all books which contained anything [against the Christian faith] or

against the Pentateuch and the Prophets. By force of this mandate Pfefferkorn was to be the sole judge of what was to be considered pernicious or otherwise, and his authority in this respect was to extend throughout the German Empire. He entered the synagogue, and in spite of the protests of the Jews he took away indiscriminately as many books as he could lay hands on, and forbade the Jews, in the name of the Emperor, to pray in their synagogue. The day was too short to search the private houses for books, and he appointed the following day for this purpose. But the protestations of the Jews were so vigorous that the priests who accompanied Pfefferkorn refused to disturb them on their Sabbath, and the second day of the festival being a Sunday, the confiscation was adjourned till the following Monday. The books already taken were meanwhile deposited with the town council.

The Jews were not slow in comprehending the importance of the measure. Not only the slight put upon them, not only the monetary value of the books, which was considerable, not only the attachment they felt for the religious works on which hands were thus ruthlessly laid—it was not this alone that stirred the Jews of Frankfort to activity, but it was the danger to life and limb which, as they justly feared, would follow this outrage. But who was this Pfefferkorn? We have just seen that he was the bearer of a mandate from the Emperor Maximilian, that he was the Emperor's representative in the battle of the books, that he was to be the sole arbiter of what constituted



blasphemy against the Christian religion, and the judge of what conflicted with the religion of the Jews themselves. For although the mandate ordered the presence of priests and magistrates at every search, this was a mere matter of form, Pfefferkorn being the man commissioned to summon them to these duties, and all this, as the Imperial decree expressed it, because of his learning and knowledge of the Jewish faith.

Johann Pfefferkorn's name had once been Joseph. At that time he was a Jew, by trade a butcher. When in that station of life he was once caught in the act of committing a burglary. He was put in prison, and would most certainly have been executed had not his friends ransomed him. Afterwards he was baptized, assumed the name of Johann, and, like many another convert, did all he could to inflict injury on his previous co-religionists. For this purpose he wrote several pamphlets, and by his attacks on the great German Humanist, Johann Reuchlin, he raised a storm which vibrated all over Europe, and reached wherever people interested themselves in the learning and religion of the time. Pfefferkorn was probably nothing more than a willing and energetic accessory in a conspiracy of the [Dominicans] of Cologne against Jewish wealth. As such he was regarded by his contemporaries and by most of the authors who subsequently treated the subject. As the most conspicuous among the Dominican enemies of the Jews at Cologne, I mention Ortvinus Gratius, the Grand Inquisitor Jacob von Hochstraten, and Arnold von Tungeren. The baptized Jew and priest, Victor

von Carben, seems to have played only a secondary part in the affair. But Pfefferkorn has not escaped the fate of those who have made themselves infamous in history, the fate of being subjected to a thorough process of whitewashing. Ludwig Geiger, in his life of Reuchlin and in pamphlets scattered over various magazines, was at particular pains to remove any stains that might undeservedly stick to the reputation of Pfefferkorn. L. Geiger denies that Pfefferkorn had been either a butcher or a burglar, or that his conversion and his subsequent persecutions of the Jews were prompted by mercenary motives. He maintains that Pfefferkorn was not a tool in the hands of the Dominicans, but that the action of the latter was the consequence of Pfefferkorn's representations. He is of opinion that Pfefferkorn, a man of violent fanaticism, attempted to convert the Jews to Christianity by writings and persuasion, and that he became violent, abusive, and outrageous after he had been irritated by opposition.

These opposing views of Pfefferkorn's character will be considered in the course of this narrative. The first shot that was launched at the Jews under the name of Pfefferkorn, was a book of which two German editions entitled *Joedenspiegel* (*Jews' Mirror*) and a Latin edition called *Speculum Exhortationis* appeared in the year 1507. Pfefferkorn's avowed purpose in this, as in all his other writings, was to convert the Jews to Christianity. He tries to show in the *Joedenspiegel* how unreasonable it was of the Jews to decline to adopt the doctrines

of Christianity, to go on expecting the Messiah and to refuse their assent to the belief that he had already come ; that it was particularly wicked of them that they refused to believe in Mary in the same way as the Christians did. The Jews did not in his opinion reject Christianity because they could not, but because they would not believe in it. They would not believe in it even if an angel came down from heaven to announce its truth. Their unbelief arose entirely out of the stubbornness of their hearts and their obstinacy. He therefore modestly presumed to advise the princes, because he was acquainted with the three causes of the pertinacity of the Jews and with the means to shake it. The first cause was that they were permitted to practise usury. This should not be tolerated, in spite of the many advantages accruing therefrom to a great number of Christians. He counsels the princes who had not yet expelled the Jews to abstain from doing so. This apparent mildness, which Pfefferkorn did not repeat in any of his subsequent works, was however rendered nugatory by the advice he tendered on the second point. For, as the second cause why the Jews clung to their faith, he assigns the fact that they were not compelled to visit the churches to hear Christian sermons. He therefore counsels the princes not to tolerate any Jews in their territories unless the latter be forced to go to church and hear Christianity preached to them. As the third impediment to their conversion he mentions their books. These must be taken away ; they could not possibly be left to

them. They were the storehouses of everything wicked and irreligious; they did the greatest harm to the Christian Church, against which they were directed in every point. Nothing should be left to Jews (no festival prayer book, no daily prayer book), nothing except the text of the Bible.

Graetz here gives Pfefferkorn credit for a virtuous intention, which, in my opinion, he was far from possessing. Graetz thinks that Pfefferkorn, for the sake of gaining over the Jews to his opinions, was in this pamphlet rather kinder to the Jews, and that he therefore denied that the blood accusation, so often raised against the Jews, had any foundation. But we all know that the blood accusation is a monster with many heads. None of these heads has any brains, each of them is provided with sharp venomous teeth. The most notorious form of that dangerous accusation is this, that the Jews made use of blood in their Passover rites. On this phase of the accusation Pfefferkorn does not touch in his pamphlet at all. But another form of the same accusation is, if possible, still sillier, still more repulsive, and not less dangerous. It was pretended that every Jew suffered by nature from a loathsome disease, the effects of which could only be cured by the use of human blood. It is of the accusation in this shape that Pfefferkorn acquits the Jews. The reason why he did so is obvious. In acquitting the Jews he acquits himself of ever having suffered in similar manner. He says, "I must defend the Jews in this instance, not however without a distinction. It is credible

that there may have been and that there still are Jews who secretly kill Christian children. But not for the sake of having their blood, but only from vengeance and hatred." Surely a defence couched in such terms was little calculated to gain over the Jews by kindness.

I have dwelt at some length on this first pamphlet of Pfefferkorn to give a specimen of the arguments, the malice, and the depravity of their author. But was Pfefferkorn the sole author of the book? Geiger says that the charge set forth by Pfefferkorn's enemies, that he was not the author of his works, and which they based on his ignorance of Latin, cannot be sustained, because the originals were always written in German, the Latin editions being mere translations. The fact is that the German and Latin editions of this book appeared almost simultaneously, so that it is difficult to say which of the two was the original. But granted even that the pamphlet was conceived and written in German by Pfefferkorn, it nevertheless remains a fact that the translation was made almost as soon as the work was written; a fact which goes far to prove that he acted from the first in collusion with others. Provided always that Pfefferkorn had since his conversion acquired sufficient knowledge of German to write in that language, for that he should have been able to do so when still a butcher is out of the question. Pfefferkorn afterwards denied that he had ever been a butcher or a burglar. Now there is no harm in being a butcher, but in his case it would imply that



He was a totally illiterate, a profoundly ignorant man. Why he did not fancy the idea of being called a burglar is obvious. L. Geiger takes Pfefferkorn's word for it against that of his accusers, even of Reuchlin, and especially because Pfefferkorn produced in one of his writings a certificate of good conduct. But that Pfefferkorn had been both a butcher and a burglar has since been established by irrefragable documentary evidence, first communicated by Graetz in his *Monatschrift* in 1875. It is therefore impossible to assume that Pfefferkorn acted by himself even in his first attack on the Jews.

In the pamphlet that appeared in 1508 under the title of *der Juden Beicht* (*Confessions of the Jews*), he ridicules the Jewish rites during the penitential days and the Day of Atonement. The character of such calumnies is well known. Trifles, to which some people might object, are represented as being the gist and quintessence of the ceremonies; the real origin and meaning of the latter, which neither stand nor fall with such disputable points, are ignored, and thus the ceremonies themselves are ridiculed and condemned. In this case the whole pamphlet seems to me to be an enlarged edition of about two chapters taken from an anti-Jewish work by Victor von Carben, which had appeared a few years before, except that some new falsehoods and some fresh misrepresentations are added; for instance, that the Jews confess their sins to cocks and fishes, after which they eat their confessors. The rites are further caricatured by some scurrilous woodcuts. General incriminations and veno-



mous denunciations in Pfefferkorn's usual style are not wanting. The book is dated "in the year 1508 on St. Valentine's day." No valentine ever was more scurrilous and vulgar. Two High German, two Low German, and two Latin editions of this book appeared in the same year.

His treatment of the Passover rites in his next pamphlet gives evidence of the progress of his malice. He considers the [rites as symbols of Christianity,] and yet he asserts that the Jews, in performing them, were heretics against their own law. As a specimen of his mode of reasoning I quote the following argument. He says that the Jews instead of having a whole lamb, no bone of which should be broken, take only a piece in which there is a broken bone. For this they should be put to death according to their own law, for the man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath was stoned to death, because he had not observed the law. Therefore the Jews are worthy of death for their ceremonies on the Passover.

His next pamphlet (1509) he called *der Juden Veindt* (*The Enemy of the Jews*). A Latin translation appeared in the same year, and in this the Dominicans of Cologne for the first time publicly avowed their connection with Pfefferkorn. An anti-Jewish poem was printed on the title-page, composed by Ortvinus Gratus, a man who virulently hated the Jews, and who had already gained his golden spurs as Jew-baiter. The book is

<sup>1</sup> A convert and missionary of a different stamp, Dr. Paulus Cassel, in a pamphlet entitled *Aletheia*, recently attempted the same kind of symbolisation.

a considerable advance on its predecessors in malice and misrepresentation. It contains a calculation of the sum to which a small coin amounts by usury in thirty years. The author repeats old accusations with fresh bitterness. He prints correctly in Hebrew a few lines of the prayer אֲבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ, but translates them according to his convenience. They should have been translated thus: "Our Father, our King! annul the designs of those who hate us. Frustrate the counsel of our enemies. Cause to cease pestilence, sword, famine, captivity, destruction and plague from the children of thy covenant." Pfefferkorn's mistranslation runs thus: "May God destroy the thoughts and counsels of our enemies by massacre, and sword, and famine, and pestilence, and various plagues, and may this happen for our sake." He declares that all Jews were perjurers, and that no Jewish physicians, of whom a great number existed at that time, could be trusted, because they intentionally killed Christians. He maintains that the Jews must not be suffered to practise usury, nor must they be allowed to amass wealth in any other way. They must either be expelled, or the lowest work must be assigned to them, such as sweeping the streets, sweeping chimneys, removing filth, clearing out dog-kennels, and the like. The Talmud must be taken away and no book left them save the Bible.

Thus far Pfefferkorn and the Dominicans had fought against the Jews with the pen only. They scattered their pamphlets broadcast, and many editions appeared within a short period.

I do not doubt that the Jews must both indirectly and directly have suffered from these machinations. But this was not enough. The firebrands of Cologne wanted some more signal effects, some riot, some expulsion, some wholesale confiscation. Their instigation of the princes of Germany had so far produced no results. They resolved to effect their purpose with the Emperor himself. The Emperor Maximilian was at that time encamped before Padua. Thither Pfefferkorn betook himself. On his way he halted at Munich to visit Maximilian's sister, Cunigund, who was Abbess in a convent at that place. She was only too happy to be able to assist in such pious doings, and she gave Pfefferkorn letters to her brother, in which she implored the latter to comply with Pfefferkorn's desires. Thus he obtained from the Emperor a mandate, which authorised him to inspect, in presence of a priest and two magistrates, all books possessed by the Jews, and to suppress such as he found to contain anything against the Christian faith. Armed with this mandate he returned, but before putting it into execution he visited the celebrated German Humanist, Johann Reuchlin, at Stuttgart, whom he invited to ride with him to the Rhine, and to assist him in carrying out the mandate against the Jews. Various reasons are suggested why Pfefferkorn took this step ; among others that his object was to disarm in advance any objections against the enterprise by making it appear that it was made under the auspices of a man like Reuchlin. At the same time the party of Cologne wished Reuchlin to commit

himself, because they were displeased with him for having introduced amongst Christians the study of Hebrew. This is the opinion of Graetz.

Geiger thinks that Pfefferkorn required Reuchlin's assistance as a lawyer, for the latter had been for a long time the legal adviser of the Dominicans; or, possibly, that he wanted to give a scientific colour to the matter by the co-operation of the first authority in Hebrew. I do not think that the Dominicans, in asking for Reuchlin's assistance, had any sinister designs against him. They only thought of harming the Jews, and they were under the impression that Reuchlin was the proper person to assist them in their enterprise. In the first place, they did not think that anybody hated the Jews less than they did themselves. Of such sentiments of rectitude, justice, disinterested love of knowledge, as animated Reuchlin, they had no idea. They knew that six years before he had written a few pages in answer to the question, "Why the Jews are so long in misery," which question he answered by the trite arguments of their sin against the founder of Christianity, of their persistence in that sin, and the like. He mentioned in terms of condemnation three books of the Jews written against the Christians. He must therefore have been considered by the Dominicans as a zealous antagonist of the Jews and their doctrines, and this, in a different sense, he really was. But these people had no eyes for the sparks of humanity that lurk in Reuchlin's anti-Jewish pamphlet, for the germs of tolerance which are disseminated

over these few pages. They considered Reuchlin as one of them. When we add to this that he was their regular legal adviser, and that his knowledge of Hebrew particularly qualified him to a business like the present, it is plain that it did not occur to them for a moment to doubt that he would eagerly grasp at the opportunity of assisting in so holy an enterprise.

Let us try to picture to ourselves this meeting between Pfefferkorn and Reuchlin. There can be no question that Pfefferkorn must have been greatly elated by his preliminary successes. To be made much of by a set of men whom he probably considered as the first men of his age; to have been graciously received by the Emperor's sister, by the Emperor himself; to be called in an Imperial decree the Emperor's faithful Johann Pfefferkorn; to be appointed the sole agent in a momentous affair—he must have felt as if he had the world at his feet. How must Reuchlin have regarded him? When Pfefferkorn had introduced himself to Reuchlin, had told him all he had to tell, had spoken of his designs against the Jewish books, had revealed as much of himself as it was in his interest to reveal, I imagine Reuchlin to have muttered to himself: "There he is, Sergius in the flesh!"

About thirteen years previously Reuchlin had written a comedy in Latin under the title of *Sergius*, in which the character of the person who now stood before him was sketched with remarkable accuracy. If we were not so well informed about the date at which this comedy was written, one could



imagine that Pfefferkorn had sat for the portrait of Sergius. Reuchlin is said to have directed his satire against the man whom he held for the chief cause that he was obliged to flee from Würtemberg, the monk Holzinger. He chastises the latter as Sergius, a native of Arabia, a man of the greatest impudence and of the most corrupt morals. He had been a monk in a convent, but the crimes he had committed were so numerous that it was in vain that his brother monks tried to correct his evil ways. Impatient at their constant rebukes he left the convent, assumed the Mahomedan faith, and became the fiercest persecutor of the Christians. The picture of the apostate is painted by Reuchlin in the most vivid colours. Such a person it was who now stood before him. Of course, Reuchlin could not then have known in how far this Pfefferkorn answered to the Sergius of his fancy, but we may presume that he understood at first sight what manner of person he had to do with. The Dominicans of Cologne imagined that they would derive help from Reuchlin, but never did men fall into a greater miscalculation. Reuchlin excused himself from responding to Pfefferkorn's summons by pleading the stress of other affairs. He approved of the suppression of books which reviled Christianity, but was of opinion that the mandate had some formal defects. Pfefferkorn asked Reuchlin to point out to him wherein these defects consisted, and the latter tore a scrap off a piece of paper and noted them down. Pfefferkorn, however, nothing daunted, put into execution the confiscation of



Jewish books in Frankfort on Friday, 28th September, 1509, and this initial step was followed by other confiscations at Mayence, Bingen, Lorch, Lahnstein, and Deutz.

We have seen that at Frankfort Pfefferkorn could not complete his search on the Friday mentioned. The priests who accompanied him interceded, and the examination was adjourned till Monday. The Jews of Frankfort sent a deputy to Worms on Friday to endeavour to stop the outrage by the interference of the High Court, the Kammergericht. On Saturday they despatched a messenger to the Elector and Archbishop of Mayence, Uriel of Memmingen, to whose jurisdiction Frankfort belonged. Uriel was a man of culture, had studied law, was of a mild nature, and was not unfriendly to the Jews. The Jews hoped to persuade the Archbishop to forbid his priests to participate in the affair. Their success was complete. On Monday Pfefferkorn and his companions again put in an appearance. The Jews had recovered from their surprise, and resolved on a line of action. They received Pfefferkorn with energetic protests, for they were anxious to gain time for the messenger to Uriel to return. They said they would appeal to the Emperor before the search should be proceeded with, and they persuaded the priests and the councillors to let the matter stand over till Tuesday, in order that the council might decide whether they had a right to appeal to the Emperor or not. The council gave it as their opinion that they could appeal only after they had complied with the terms of the

mandate. The confiscation was to be resumed in the afternoon, but before that time letters arrived from the Archbishop, in which he ordered the priests not to have anything more to do with the affair, and in which he expressed his dissatisfaction at their having committed themselves at all. This caused the councillors to withdraw also, for, according to the terms of the mandate, the presence of a priest was essential. Thus Pfefferkorn was baffled for the moment.

The Jews sent a deputy to the Emperor, and summoned other Jewish communities to appoint delegates to a meeting in Frankfort in the following month. The books that had been taken away were deposited with the council. The Archbishop, who may have resented the inauguration of the business in his diocese without his consent being asked, wrote to the Emperor to the effect that it had never come to his knowledge that the Jews in his diocese possessed any books of the character described in the mandate. He said that Pfefferkorn was not clever enough for such an investigation; that he was not even sufficiently read in Holy Writ; that it was his (Uriel's) duty to inform the Emperor of this in case Pfefferkorn should apply for further powers. He suggested that the Emperor should appoint a person better acquainted with Jewish matters, in which case he would give his assistance. The Archbishop also wrote to his representative at the Imperial court to exert himself that no further authority might be conferred on Pfefferkorn, and to interest himself in favour of the Jews.

Pfefferkorn meanwhile again visited the Emperor to obtain a fresh mandate, purged this time from all formal defects. He again armed himself with a letter of recommendation from Cunigund. Thereupon commenced a series of intrigues at the court of the Emperor between Pfefferkorn and the Jewish delegates. It is true the Jews had some recommendations from powerful protectors, but Pfefferkorn had, besides this, something that was better still. He was plentifully supplied with money. The Jews had no money; they were obliged to borrow some at the ruinous rate of 200 per cent. The consequences were deplorable. They fought, however, bravely; they appealed to their privileges, which were inquired into and found to be legally of force. They presented a certificate from the Lord of Gutenstein, proving that Pfefferkorn had committed a burglary, and that he had narrowly escaped the gallows. But Pfefferkorn's representations prevailed. His audacity knew no bounds. He slandered the Jews; he bullied them in the presence of the Emperor, taking advantage of his brand new Christianity. The Jews could answer nothing; they fell on their knees before the Emperor, who afterwards sent his marshal to assure them that no harm would befall them.

Pfefferkorn obtained a second mandate, dated Roveredo, 10th November, 1509. The mandate complied ostensibly with the suggestions of the Archbishop Uriel. Scholars of the Universities of Cologne, Mayence, Heidelberg, and Erfurt were to meet at an appointed time to examine the books in the

presence of Jewish Rabbis. The committee of inquiry was also to comprise "Jacob von Hochstraten of the Dominicans, doctor-of-law and grand inquisitor; the most learned Johannes Reuchlin, doctor-of-law, well grounded and versed in Hebrew writings; and Victor von Carben, formerly a Rabbi and now a priest." The whole affair was committed to the charge and supervision of Pfefferkorn (*zu Lob und Ere*, A 7a). Pfefferkorn was thus included as a member of the committee, but this could hardly be said to have been in formal opposition to Uriel's wishes, since so many other scholars, and even the Rabbis, were to be present. Uriel's suggestions were adopted in letter, but not in spirit, and the machinations of the Dominicans of Cologne had produced the results for which they had intrigued ever since they had launched the *Joedenspiegel* two years before. In that pamphlet they had demanded (*Spec. Exh.* B 3a, ed. 1508) that honest men should be consulted, men of sound doctrine, of perfect faith, and of spotless life; this demand was now responded to beyond expectation.

Fresh confiscations of books were now undertaken. The Jews of the larger congregations had not readily responded to the summons of those in Frankfort, but the new activity of Pfefferkorn stirred them into action. The Council of Frankfort, who had hitherto remained in a position of passive indifference, and had, though not very zealously, obeyed the decrees of the Emperor, now joined the Jews in their protests. They called attention to the privileges of the Jews; they pointed out at the

Reichstag at Worms that the literature of the Jews was useful for the spread of Christianity. These feelings in favour of the Jews were strengthened by the fact that Pfefferkorn sought to lay his hands also on the goods of foreign Jews, who had come to Frankfort to sell their books at the fair: this involved a breach of ancient privileges, and might embroil the city with a number of princes and lords who had given the Jews letters of safe-conduct for their persons and their property. At any rate, the conference of scholars ordered by the Emperor never took place. On the contrary, the Emperor issued a third decree, directing the restoration to the Jews of all the confiscated books, on the condition that they would employ them in their synagogues, houses, and schools, but that they would not make any other use of them.

Pfefferkorn and his friends had not been idle in the meantime. A new pamphlet, commencing, *zu Lob und Ere des Fürsten Maximilian* (*In honour and glory of the Emperor Maximilian*) was written, and appeared at the beginning of the year 1510. A kind of historical survey is given of the whole business—of the mandates obtained, of the Emperor's zeal for Christianity, of the recommendations of Cunigund. It contains also a list of the confiscated books, and of those the Jews were allowed to keep. The latter list is only an enumeration of the books of the Hebrew Bible. The Jews are threatened, the Emperor incited against them; exquisite cruelty and malice are stamped on every page. Pfefferkorn

also published an appeal to the ecclesiastical and secular authorities, in which the wickedness of the Jewish books is again emphasised, and in which he declares that the Jews had attempted to bribe him to abstain from further proceedings ; that he had resisted the temptation, but that some other Christians had not been so disinterested, but were corrupted by the Jews. Certainly the fanatics of Cologne were not easily silenced. Hardly two months after the third mandate a fourth appeared, which enjoined on the Archbishop of Mayence to collect the opinions of the Universities of Cologne, Mayence, Erfurt, and Heidelberg, as also the opinions of Hochstraten, Reuchlin, Victor von Carben, and other men who were acquainted with Hebrew literature and were not Jews, as to the advisability of destroying the Jewish books. Pfefferkorn was nominated by the Emperor as the agent (*sollicitator*) in this matter, whose duty it was to send the various opinions to the Emperor.

Pfefferkorn figures here only as a kind of messenger, not as a scholar who himself was asked for his opinion. The protestations of his antagonists as to his ignorance appear at last to have prevailed. For the rest, the scheme of the people of Cologne seemed again to prove successful. The same persons and universities were again consulted, and the collection of separate opinions must have appeared a task much easier to execute than that of assembling delegates at a certain time and a certain place. The design of bringing about such a meeting had already been shipwrecked, and this new plan was started.



But the hopes they had entertained of Reuchlin were deplorably frustrated. Whatever his frame of mind when he published his anti-Jewish letter, he harped now on quite a different string. He wrote his opinion, in which he actually defended the Jewish books, except such as contained direct blasphemies against Christianity. Of the latter class, however, he said that he knew only of two books, which the Jews themselves held to be apocryphal. The opinion contains also some sharp 'hits against Pfefferkorn. The experienced lawyer who was competent to judge about the legal aspect of the affair—the only man among all those whose opinions had been solicited who possessed real knowledge of Hebrew and Jewish lore, who as a Humanist enjoyed European fame—that man had forsaken the side of the Dominicans. Their fury can be imagined. A new book by Pfefferkorn appeared, the *Handspiegel*—"Hand-glass"—as bitter this time against Reuchlin as against the Jews. Reuchlin is called in it an enemy of Christianity, an apostate, a heretic, who was bribed by the Jews, who contradicted his own opinions. His knowledge of Hebrew was a fiction, his Hebrew Grammar and Dictionary were written by others—the impostor had only printed it. He favoured and defended the Jews; he loved them instead of hating them. He could read Hebrew when the pronunciation was given in Latin or German characters. He was as quick at reading Hebrew as an ass that is hurriedly driven up a staircase. These were the accusations made, this the tone assumed

against Reuchlin. But how did Pfefferkorn become acquainted with the contents of Reuchlin's opinion? The latter, who had sent it under seal to the Archbishop of Mayence, maintained that Pfefferkorn had no right whatever to read it. He certainly had no right to make it the subject of an attack upon Reuchlin—to turn to private use a document destined for the Emperor's eye, before the Emperor's pleasure about it was known, even before the Emperor had seen it. Pfefferkorn and his wife openly hawked this pamphlet in a booth at the fair of Frankfort.

Reuchlin travelled to the Emperor, and when he saw him at Reutlingen, on the 29th of April, 1511, he showed him Pfefferkorn's libel. The Emperor was displeased with it, and promised to refer the case for decision to the Bishop of Augsburg. But this was never done, and Reuchlin, knowing full well that nothing could be gained by waiting any longer, wrote his *Augenspiegel*—"Spectacles, Eyeglass." In this he relates the whole story, gives a copy of the opinion sent by him to the Archbishop, repudiates the charge of unduly favouring the Jews, palliates, often sophistically enough, some of the statements made by him, and reproaches Pfefferkorn with having written in his *Handglass* not less than thirty-four falsehoods.

The publication of the *Augenspiegel* was a turning-point in the life of Pfefferkorn. Thus far the whole of the intrigues, malignings, incitations to violence, the production of venomous incriminations and of falsehoods, were all on his side—at least,

went under his name. But from the time of the *Augenspiegel* all that was changed ; he had no longer the game all to himself. Reuchlin's friends and admirers took the defence of the latter into their own hands, and they pilloried Pfefferkorn as a liar, as an impostor, who had traded with a knowledge of which he was totally destitute. They declared that he was the willing tool of the Dominicans in a conspiracy against the Jews and their money. Now, the question arises, Is this charge against Pfefferkorn and the Dominicans, that they aimed at gaining money by a judiciously managed persecution of the Jews, founded on fact? Can we trust to the mere assertion of the Reuchlinists? Were the latter the kind of men who would do justice to an opponent—who, whilst blaming bad actions, would acknowledge possible good intentions? I must say that, perhaps with one exception, that of Reuchlin himself, none of the adversaries of the Dominicans can be credited with this chivalry of literary warfare. With the exception of Reuchlin, they reached in respect to insinuations and misrepresentations—ay, in respect to deliberate falsehoods—the lowest level of even a Pfefferkorn himself.

It is on this point that I must call attention to the different methods of Ludwig Geiger and of Graetz, neither of whom has, in my opinion, been able to keep the balance even. Geiger deviates too much to the side of the Dominicans ; Graetz inclines too much to the side of the Reuchlinists. When we say that the Reuchlinists—always excepting Reuchlin himself

—could not be trusted in their estimate of the motives of their opponents, that their insinuations and charges required corroboration, this does not mean that their accusations could not possibly be true. They were capable of making false accusations; are, therefore, all their accusations necessarily false? This were an illogical inference, yet I cannot help thinking that Geiger occasionally drew his inferences in some such fashion. He says that Pfefferkorn had no motives except the ardour of a renegade, and perhaps a good dose of natural malignity. But what about the accusations flung at him by his enemies? Geiger declares them to be false. What he should have asserted is that they wanted corroboration. Geiger often accepts the statements of Pfefferkorn and his friends in the face of conflicting evidence. I do not think this to be just. If the Reuchlinists fancied an occasional falsehood when it suited their purposes, the party of Cologne were certainly not less addicted to the same pastime. But is it, then, true that the accusations of the Reuchlinists are altogether without corroboration? Does, then, the testimony of Reuchlin himself count for nothing? It is true, he considered himself to be the attacked party; he was subsequently driven to exasperation by his enemies, and was often most vehement in his invective. But he is acknowledged by all as a man in whom the love of truth was interwoven with his very existence, for whom it would have been an utter impossibility wilfully to misrepresent even an opponent.

Now, when a quarrel is driven to the point of embitterment which the Reuchlin-Pfefferkorn strife reached, even such a pure love of truth may sometimes be involuntarily tainted in points of minor importance. Nevertheless a man like Reuchlin, unless fully convinced of the fact, would not have persisted as he does in his books and in his letters in accusing the Cologne party of having nothing in view but Jewish money, in asserting that Pfefferkorn was as ignorant of Hebrew as a Jew could possibly be ; that he was an illiterate butcher, who, having been obliged by his misdeeds to avoid the Jews, turned against the latter ; that he was a willing instrument in the hands of the Dominicans of Cologne in their plot against the books and purses of the Jews. Such assertions, repeatedly brought forward by a man like Reuchlin, go very far to serve as a corroboration of the otherwise untrustworthy sallies of his adherents. At most we could say that they in their turn require further confirmation, but they are certainly not to be set aside in the way Geiger does.

And do they really lack this confirmation ? Is not common-sense in their favour ? Would Pfefferkorn have been able, without assistance from others, to gain the knowledge of the existence of Cunigund ; would he himself have been able to understand her importance for the matter on hand ; would he on his own motion have gone to her to solicit a letter of introduction to her brother ; and would he have ventured on his own responsibility to molest the Emperor, who had at that time quite other affairs to attend to ? Whence was he to obtain the



money for his travels and for securing the necessary backstairs' influence at court—he, a poor *Spitalmeister* and *Salzmesser*, who, when his first confiscation had been cut short by the interference of the Archbishop, prayed the Council of Frankfort for a contribution, and was fain to pocket the prodigious remuneration of two florins?

Geiger says that Pfefferkorn was not mercenary; let us see how he proves it. He says that Pfefferkorn did not embrace Christianity from mercenary motives, for—he did not from the same motives revert to Judaism. The question is, was any money ever offered him by the Jews to bring him back to his former religion? No mention is made of such an offer. Pfefferkorn only says that the Jews offered him money for discontinuing the confiscations. Perhaps this is true, and perhaps not; we have only Pfefferkorn's word for it. If true, he refused either because he was not mercenary or because he was too deeply implicated. But even if Geiger's assumption were founded on fact, it would first have to be proved, entwined as his career was with the doings of the Dominicans, and after the prominence he had gained for himself as a zealot for the propagation of Christianity, that he would have been able to become a Jew again without danger to his person. How does Geiger know that the post he had obtained at Cologne as master of the hospital and measurer of salt, which carried with it a certain position of respectability, did not make it impossible for him to accept any Jewish offer, which, according to Geiger's



notion, was made to him? Geiger strenuously denies that Pfefferkorn had ever been a butcher or a burglar, considering, as has been previously remarked, the latter's assertions to the contrary and some certificates of good conduct produced by him stronger than the unanimous evidence of all his opponents, Reuchlin included. That Pfefferkorn's assertions on this point are false has been established beyond doubt by additional documentary evidence which was discovered in Rosenthal's library in Amsterdam, and communicated by Graetz in his *Monatschrift* in 1875, after Geiger's work had appeared.<sup>1</sup> Geiger asks what motive can the Dominicans have had in concealing themselves at first behind Pfefferkorn? The answer is clear. They knew that the shafts launched at the Jews would pierce all the better if discharged by one of their own kin. It was their policy to show that the storm which broke over the Jews had been brewing in their own midst.

Geiger says of the *Handspiegel*, the first book directly turned against Reuchlin, that nobody but Pfefferkorn was responsible for it, that it was not a manifesto of the Dominicans of Cologne, for Pfefferkorn asserts most solemnly (in 1516, thus five years later), that the *Handglass* was neither written nor printed in Cologne, but in Mayence. But who had furnished him with allegations from books which it was impossible for him to read? Pfefferkorn answers readily, that they were furnished to him

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Dr. Joseph Perles' *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Hebräischen und Aramäischen Studien*, p. 29.

by the three members of the Commission appointed by the Emperor to report upon the opinions. Nobody except Pfefferkorn ever mentions such a Commission; that, as Pfefferkorn says, Hieronymus Baldung should have belonged to it was already doubted by Graetz, because he proved afterwards to be a great friend of Reuchlin; the report of the Commission as adduced by Pfefferkorn being altogether opposed to Reuchlin. But I have reasons to believe that, if not the whole report, certainly Baldung's signature, can be proved to be a forgery. The signature, given by Pfefferkorn, runs thus:—"Hieronimus de leonibus dictus Baldung sacræ theologiæ professor, artium et medicinarum doctor, &c.:" Baldung, professor of theology, doctor of arts and medicine. Where, besides this signature, which Geiger follows (p. 238), was Baldung ever called a theologian? It is well known that he was a lawyer, and had been professor at Freiburg, not of theology, but of law (Böcking, *Hutten*, Supplem. ii. p. 301 (303). Is it not suspicious that Baldung, when signing his name on a report for the Emperor, should have forgotten that he was a lawyer, and made himself a theologian instead? And why, in signing so important a document, should he have subscribed himself *Hieronimus* instead of *Pius Hieronymus*, which was his real name? It appears that the manufacturers of the document in question thought "Pius" to be, not one of his names, but a title given him for his piety. This was enough to stamp him in their eyes as a theologian, for what layman would have been honoured by the title Pius?

Accordingly they omitted it in signing his name for him. No wonder, therefore, that, in one of the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*, ii. 18, the doctor of theology, Simon Saussage, reports that somebody asked who were these three commissioners? And the answer was: I do not know, but I think they were the three men who appeared to Abraham, as mentioned in Genesis.

Another point of consideration is the amount of Pfefferkorn's Hebrew, Rabbinical, and general knowledge. Here, again, Geiger breaks a lance on behalf of his client. He says Pfefferkorn was no scholar, but when Erasmus called him a pure idiot (*prorsus idiota*), this expression might be too strong; nor was he in Hebrew as ignorant as Graetz tried to make him out. He knew as much as an ordinary Jew of that time. Pfefferkorn said that he translated the Gospels into Hebrew, and there was no reason to doubt the statement.

Now it is my opinion that Pfefferkorn stood in every branch of knowledge on the lowest step, and that in respect to Hebrew the term *prorsus idiota* is, if possible, hardly strong enough. Reuchlin, when exposing the thirty-four falsehoods with which he charges Pfefferkorn, says, concerning the sixth falsehood, that the baptized Jew had learned in his youth the Pentateuch, according to the custom of the Jews, and, perhaps, some lessons out of the Bible, called Hapthoras, which they must read every week throughout the year. In this, says Reuchlin, he was perhaps skilled and ready from habit like a nun in the psalter, for he had received for this severe thrashings at school ("dann

man hatt in dick in der schule darumb geschlagen"). For the rest he did not know anything thoroughly. And regarding the twenty-fifth falsehood Reuchlin says: "When he was in my library I put before him a Talmudical work called *Mordechai*. He thereupon confessed that he had only learned the Bible, and did not understand any such books." Geiger speaks of exaggeration on the part of Reuchlin; but the statement of the latter of what happened in his library is the barest statement of fact, and cannot be doubted; and where are the signs of exaggeration in that other statement that Pfefferkorn was beaten at school? Jacob von Hochstraten wrote a book against Petrus Ravennas because the latter disapproved of the custom of hanging a young lad for a petty theft, but we do not find that anybody objected in the fifteenth century to a schoolboy being thrashed. At any rate, Pfefferkorn knew no Hebrew; if he had ever known any, he had forgotten it. His own writings prove it. Graetz gives some examples of his ignorance, but these refer to Talmudical knowledge only. But he was even ignorant of the Hebrew names of the books of the Bible. I have already mentioned a list given by him of the books he had allowed the Jews to keep. In that list the names of the books are given in Hebrew; over every Hebrew word the name of the book is placed in Latin, underneath every Hebrew word the pronunciation of such word is given. I make the printer responsible for false spelling, but what must we think of an enumeration like this: מלכי בתובים משל איום האבקוק צפניה חגי זכריה, the pronunciation underneath is

also given as Malachias, Xovim, Mischle, Iyoeff, but the Latin names on the top are Malachias, Psalterium, Parabole, Job, &c. It is evident that he did not know that the Hebrew name for the Psalms was תהלים, that he took the word כתובים written on the flyleaf, a name denoting all the Hagiographa from the Psalms to the Chronicles inclusive, to mean only the Psalms.

In his *Enemy of the Jews* he quotes verses 11-15 of the first chapter of Isaiah, with the pronunciation in black letter on the top and the translation under each word. In verse 12, מי בקש זאת מירכם רמס, the word רמס (remos) is printed דמס (demom). Considered as a misprint this would be pardonable enough, 'ר and 'ד, 'ס and 'ם being easily confounded. But in the pronunciation on the top of the word we find in black letter also the word DEMOM. This first chapter of Isaiah is particularly well known to Jews, because it is read as Haphtora on the Sabbath before the fast of Ab, and it is chanted in the same way as the Lamentations of Jeremiah on that fast. It is, therefore, prominent among the Haphtoras, and if Pfefferkorn had had the slightest recollection of what he had learned when a youth, and he had found in the copy he consulted the word דמס, he would have been able to correct such a glaring blunder, which is found both in the German and Latin edition. It appears, therefore, that Pfefferkorn, after his conversion, did not look into any Hebrew book, that he forgot even the scanty amount of Hebrew that was thrashed into him at school, and of which he was once perhaps possessed.

As has already been indicated above, the appearance of Reuchlin's *Augenspiegel* marked the turning-point in the career of Pfefferkorn. Before that book was written, Pfefferkorn's attack had been unprovoked. He had undertaken to destroy the books of the Jews, to do the latter all possible harm; he had made private use of a document destined for the eye of the Emperor, and was the ostensible libeller. The publication of the *Augenspiegel* changed the whole complexion of affairs. Henceforth Pfefferkorn is not so much engaged in making as in repelling attacks. He writes with increasing bitterness, not only against the Jews, but also against Reuchlin and his friends. He would probably have done so if his opponents had contented themselves with calling him by his right name, with showing him and the world who and what he really was. In that case he would have been at pains to show that he had neither been a butcher nor a burglar, that his intentions were pure, that he was not an Abecedarian in Hebrew and worse than an Abecedarian in everything else. But when we see him, Pfefferkorn, ill-treated as meanly as he treated others, when we see his enemies adopt tactics against him such as one would not use even against one's Pfefferkorn, then it is idle to be surprised that in his subsequent writings he tried to outdo his own previous efforts and the attacks of his adversaries. It is idle to expect a Pfefferkorn to turn a saint when treated after his own fashion. This it is that Graetz seems to have expected. Graetz has no word of disapproval for the enormities of the false accu-



sations, for the ruthless, cowardly, murderous blows flung at the head of Pfefferkorn; but all his indignation is reserved for Pfefferkorn, who wards off these blows with similar thrusts.

Pfefferkorn's latest pamphlets, the *Brant-Spiegel* (*Burning Glass*), the *Sturm* (*Alarm Bell*), the *Defensio*, the *Mitleydige Claeg* are more venomous than the previous emanations from his pen, but this virulence is explicable, however much it is to be condemned. His enemies had preferred a charge against him which was untrue, which, consequently, served his turn. The charge was so atrocious, the concoction so easily refuted, Pfefferkorn so readily cleared on this count, that, with some people, it must have procured him credit even for his falsehoods. The attack fell chiefly to the charge of the famous Ulrich von Hutten. Towards the end of September, 1514, a man called Pfaff Rapp was condemned to death; some said his name was also Pfefferkorn. There is a probability that Ulrich von Hutten was one of the judges at the trial. It is not certain that this delinquent was born a Jew at all. It is not certain what his crime was or whether he had committed one; but he was justly condemned according to the notions of that time; for torture had extracted from him a confession of a number of possible and impossible offences. Among other crimes, he confessed to having tortured and stabbed part of a Host till the blood flowed out of it, to having received a hundred florins from Jews to poison the Duke of Magdeburg, his brother and their court, to having promised the Jews to poison all the country people in the

dioceses of Magdeburg and Halberstadt. For this lengthy catalogue of offences, the man's flesh was torn from him with red-hot pincers, after which he was roasted to death.

The Reuchlinists invented the story that this man was Johann Pfefferkorn, who had attacked Reuchlin. A poem was composed, most probably by Hutten, in which the poet says that Germany could never have produced such a monster. It were better not to baptize any Jews, for this man had committed crimes which surpass those of the monsters of mythology, which are enumerated at length. The alleged crimes are mentioned, and emphasis is given to the monstrosity of torturing a Host and of causing the blood to flow from it, and the praises of Albert of Magdeburg are sung, whose good fortune it was so signally to punish him. Now, it is quite clear that the authors of this mystification knew better or could have known better if they had chosen. That Hutten's indignation was got up for the occasion is justly pointed out by Strauss. Hutten was the last man to believe in the bleeding of the Host; he would have laughed to scorn such a notion if it had been adduced by an opponent. The falsehood was so tenaciously adhered to, that, as Pfefferkorn says, when he proved to be alive, his enemies said that the other Pfefferkorn was his brother, and when he showed that he had no brother, they said it was his cousin. We see from this that the adherents of Reuchlin were not very particular in choosing the weapons with which they fought, they were not troubled by high-toned

scruples of chivalrous warfare. Their arms did not improve in morality in the course of time, but they gained considerably in wit, keenness, and effectiveness.

They unmasked their batteries and bombarded the positions of their enemies with one discharge after another of satirical letters, which hit with such deadly effect that their adversaries were unable to lift their heads. It is true the latter tried to retaliate, but, although equalling their opponents in malignity and surpassing them in mendacity and unscrupulousness, yet they were destitute of the caustic wit and the ideal perfection of satirical spirit of a Crotus Rubianus and an Ulrich von Hutten, as exemplified in the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*, the "Letters of the Unknown Men."

Reuchlin, in order to show that he had the greatest intellects of the age on his side, had published a series of letters written by the celebrities of the time to himself, under the title of *Epistolæ Clarorum Virorum*, "Letters of Famous Men." Crotus Rubianus, who was most probably the author of the first series of the satirical letters, chose therefore for the title of his satire "Letters of Obscure or Unknown Men." To translate *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum* by "Letters of Obscurantists," "Briefe von Dunkelmännern," is translating according to the *Drash*, not according to the *Pshat*. As the *Epistolæ Clarorum Virorum* were written to Reuchlin, the satirical letters were pretended to be written to Ortvinus Gratius, one of the most conspicuous members of the Cologne party. Whether

all or any of the charges preferred against Grätius are true or not, whether he is really the sainted man whom his enthusiastic apologist, D. Reichling, tried to depict, I shall not attempt to decide. Why he should have been selected as the target against which the shafts of the satirists were particularly directed; whether it was really because one of the chief co-operators in the manufacture of that famous satire, Hermann von dem Busche, had a personal spite against him, it is enough to know that he was an inveterate enemy of the Jews, as he had shown on more than one occasion; that he was one of the principal protectors of Pfefferkorn, some of whose works he had translated into Latin, if not entirely composed. About the moral character of these satirical productions I can only admit the justice of the description given of them by Sir William Hamilton in an article in the *Edinburgh Review* of March, 1831 (vol. liii.), part of which was reprinted in a life of Reuchlin written by Barham. Sir W. Hamilton says: "Morally considered this satire is an atrocious libel, which can only be palliated on the plea of retaliation, necessity, the importance of the end, and the consuetude of the times. Its victims are treated like vermin, hunted without law and exterminated without mercy."

That the accusations made in these letters cannot be all true I readily admit, but not that they must be necessarily false because they are contained in these lampoons. Many of them are otherwise fully confirmed. The tone of these

letters is in the highest degree indecent, the expressions most irreverent whether considered from a catholic or from a humanistic, certainly from a Jewish point of view. Bible texts and even the name of God are freely used for the sake of illustrating some filthy and obscene sally. The language in which they are couched is a caricature of the dog-Latin in vogue with the monks of those days, and its drollery cannot be described. To what point of perfection satirical art is raised in these letters is manifest from the fact that even great and unprejudiced men have admiration only for the art with which the attacks are executed, and have no eyes for the wickedness which this art embellishes.

The impression they produced in Germany was electric. Even the scruples of the more sober friends of Reuchlin had to struggle with the inclination to smile produced by that which was ludicrous in them, and laughter soon drove every other emotion before it. I said before that many, if not most, of the accusations contained in the letters are only too true, and the frivolity prevalent in them may have had some good results. Looking only upon the results, what does it matter then that the authors were themselves as deeply steeped in the vices which they laid to the charge of their enemies? When we consider the results only, what does it matter if the persons named in the letters were partly or altogether free from the vices imputed to them, since the attacks were directed against a class of persons, namely the monks, rather than against this

or that individual? That the monks were portrayed in life-like resemblance is evident from the fact that the monks in Belgium and England did not at first notice the satire at all, and really thought that one of their [midst had written these letters as a satire against Reuchlin and in favour of the Dominicans. This fact is not without importance in respect to the trustworthiness of the accusations made in the letters. A doctor of theology at Louvain went even so far as to buy twenty copies for distribution among his friends. These facts are related by Erasmus, of whom it is said that he laughed so much at one of these letters that an abscess in his throat opened and he was cured. These facts are, however, very inconvenient to those who would fain declare all accusations in the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum* to be malicious inventions; and the afore-mentioned apologist of Ortvinus Gratius says (page 8) that he does not hesitate to consider the whole narrative as a bad joke. This is easy, but the statement of Erasmus is confirmed by Sir Thomas More, who wrote in 1516, that is, before Erasmus, that the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum* pleased everybody in a most remarkable manner. They pleased the scholars as a jest; they pleased the ignorant people also; for when the latter laughed, they intended only to laugh at the style, which they did not want to defend, but which in their opinion was compensated for by the gravity of the contents. I take this quotation from the article in the *Edinburgh Review*, in which it is also stated that these letters have always been a stumbling-block to English



critics and historians. Of the examples adduced there I shall only cite that of the essayist, Richard Steele, who says in the *Tatler* (1710): "It seems this is a collection of letters which some profound blockheads, who lived before our time, have written in honour of each other and for their mutual information in each others' absurdities." What does it matter in the result if Ortvinus Gratius was really the saint, and Arnold von Tungeren the still purer saint, as the apologist, D. Reichling, describes them? For let us not forget that one of the proofs of Reichling for the purity of the morals of A. von Tungeren consists in this, that the latter was the author of a book against what?—against those very vices of the monks for which the latter were so unmercifully pilloried in the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum* (p. 61, n. 4). Can we say after this that the reproaches in these letters are devoid of all corroboration? It would be interesting, perhaps, to give some specimens from the letters themselves, but as I should be obliged to confine myself to extracts bearing on Pfefferkorn, and as the reflections on him are almost invariably made in a very coarse tone, I think it is rather my duty to be silent. A most interesting survey of the letters can be found in the *Life of Ulrich von Hutten*, by Strauss, translated into English by Mrs. Sturge.

But enough has been said to show that we cannot expect Pfefferkorn to be gentle in his expressions after attacks of this kind. It is difficult to understand Graetz's indignation against Pfefferkorn for the last pamphlet the latter is known to have

written. If ever Pfefferkorn's virulence was excusable, it was in this case. It is true that Pfefferkorn, as Geiger says (p. 435), attacks Reuchlin ("Eine mitleydliche Claeg uber alle Claeg an unsern allergnaedlichsten Kayser," &c.) in terms which would be too strong for the worst criminal, and when we wish to have an idea of the height to which his anger against the Jews ascends, we must add together all expressions of violence ever before uttered by him. This cannot be defended, but it is not unnatural. The book has a picture of Reuchlin, quartered and hanged. Reuchlin, who despises God, should be cut up into ✓ four pieces and hung on the high-roads. Pfefferkorn calls Reuchlin the chief [coiner of wickedness,] a master of lies, a blasphemer of the Church, a falsifier of Holy Writ, a deceiver and seducer of the Christian people, a patron of the perfidious Jews, Dr. Woodenspoon, Dr. Piggyspoon, and a whole catalogue more. But these expressions are no more than a strongly reflected echo of the vituperations hurled at his own head. He wants Reuchlin to be quartered and hung. No doubt, very unfriendly of him; but what did the Reuchlinists want to be done to him? In their indignation and resentment against the party at Cologne, some of them, namely, Hermann v. d. Busche and U. von Hutten, composed a poem, "Triumphus Capnionis," in honour of Reuchlin, in which the latter is described as triumphing over his enemies. The pageant is described, in which the triumphant Reuchlin is led about in the imagination of the poets, and his enemies are dragged along in chains. To

Pfefferkorn the following words are devoted (v. 704-735): "Call two hangmen, bring all your tools, the cross, the noose, and the hook with the ropes. Now, ye hangmen, do this. Put him in such a position that his face is turned towards the earth, his knees upwards, that he may not look to heaven, nor contaminate us with his eyes. Make him bite the soil with his slanderous lips and eat some of the dust. Do not delay, tear his tongue, that first origin of evil, out of his mouth, or else he will say something wicked at the procession. Tear off his nose and both his ears, put the hook into his feet, and drag him thus, face and chest downward, to sweep the earth. Scatter about his teeth, so that nothing remain in the mouth to hurt, and although his hands are tied on his back, yet cut off the tips of his fingers," and so on. Graetz gives a translation of this part of the poem without a single word of disapprobation; and then he is surprised and indignant at the terms which Pfefferkorn afterwards applies to Reuchlin and the Jews! I have not quoted the whole passage, how this torture excites commiseration in nobody, and only rouses the derision of boy and man, of married and unmarried women. All laugh at and applaud the sight. Again, a description follows of Pfefferkorn's position in all its sickening details. The poet cannot leave the mutilated body alone; a few verses after he again cards his skin, and scourges him, and cudgels him, and makes him slowly breathe his last under these tortures. The honest and truly impartial Böcking, in spite of the veneration he feels for his hero, von Hutten,

observes that the author relapses here into the same foaming acerbity against the real Pfefferkorn, which sullies his declamation against the pseudo-Pfefferkorn. Böcking is surprised that such details can please anybody who is not a professional executioner; that the author did not understand that such exquisite cruelty can have only one effect, namely, that of rousing in humane readers some feelings in favour of Pfefferkorn. I, myself, am obliged to agree for once with D. Reichling, that the original of the enormities found in Pfefferkorn's last pamphlet is contained in that poem, and that the imitation leaves its model far behind.

No, it is not his last pamphlet which condemns Pfefferkorn, but the books published at the beginning of his career, those that were issued before 1511, and the activity he displayed during the same period. It is certainly doubtful how many of these infamous distortions of the truth, how many of these downright falsehoods must be attributed to him. But whoever hides under the name of Pfefferkorn, the books are witnesses of the lowest impulses of human nature, made more repulsive by the fact that they profess to be inspired by motives of religion. Nor would Pfefferkorn's memory be rescued from well-merited obloquy, even if his malignant efforts were inspired by a sense of duty, by an intense and fanatical self-deception.

JOHANN REUCHLIN  
THE FATHER OF THE STUDY OF HEBREW  
AMONG CHRISTIANS

(1896)

ON writing of Johann Reuchlin as the father of the study of Hebrew among Christians, I experience a difficulty of a peculiar nature. It would be my duty to confine myself to the dry, sober, and prosaic details of my subject; but at every step I am in danger of being drawn away from my immediate purpose by the many points of interest afforded by the personality and career of Johann Reuchlin.

Every detail in the life of Reuchlin is of absorbing interest. Whether we look upon the greatness achieved by him in his luxuriant mental endowments, or upon the greatness thrust upon him by the unholy zeal of his enemies, we are equally struck by the commanding power of his intellect, the noble dignity of his conduct, and the harmony in which the various traits of his character were blended, so as to form an imposing and, at the same time, sympathetic figure. It is almost impossible to speak of him merely as a man who was at pains to discover the abstruse rules of an unknown language; to

consider Reuchlin only in the light of a laborious grammarian who devoted his life to the study of ancient languages, and thus drew Hebrew within the circle of his investigations. If he had been only this, I could at once commence discussing his books on the Hebrew language, dwelling upon the theories he evolved, the authorities upon whom they were based, the diligence bestowed by him on finding a suitable soil for the seeds strewn, and his struggle to procure admission at the various seats of learning for his newly discovered discipline. But he was more than a merely great scholar whose thirst for knowledge would cause him to explore distant fields of learning. The motives that induced Reuchlin to plunge himself into the depths of Hebrew and Rabbinical lore were the outflow of his peculiarly constructed mind, and of convictions that forced his keen sense of duty into a certain direction. These we must try to comprehend first, before we are able to judge of Reuchlin as the father of the study of Hebrew in Christian Europe.

I shall, therefore, indulge in one deviation from my subject, and this only for the purpose of elucidating the workings of Reuchlin's mind when he determined to make the propagation of the study of Hebrew one of the objects of his life. I shall allow myself the pleasure of considering his convictions, both religious and philosophical, and the circumstances that caused him to embrace them, in order to understand the stimulus that impelled him to take the road on which we find him. I shall



force myself, however reluctantly, to shut my eyes to the many other attractive phases of his career; I shall omit his struggle with vile but powerful opponents when he resolutely set his face against the desire of the latter to commit all Jewish books to the fire. I shall be silent upon his many grand achievements in other branches of learning, on his career as statesman, lawyer, ambassador, courtier, writer of comedies and of learned works on Greek and Latin languages and literature. Those who wish to gather information on these various points can refer to Ludwig Geiger's biography of Reuchlin, which appeared in Leipzig in 1871. In English there is a life of Reuchlin, by F. Barham (London, 1843), which is only an imitation of older German books on the subject. The quarrel with the book-burners is described in the *Life of Ulrich von Hutten*, by Strauss, translated into English by Mrs. Sturge, and in an essay written by me, entitled "John Pfefferkorn and the Battle of the Books," which appeared in the *Jewish Quarterly Review* of January 1892.<sup>1</sup> An interesting essay on the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*, from the pen of Sir William Hamilton, appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* of March 1831.

Johann Reuchlin was born in 1455, twelve years after Rudolph Agricola, and about twelve years before Erasmus of Rotterdam. At that time Scholasticism was still predominant at most universities. It had, however, already commenced to totter in its struggle against Humanism, to whose attacks

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 73 *sqq.*

it finally succumbed. During several centuries the object of Scholasticism had been to harmonise the religious doctrines of the Church with the philosophy of the ancients. It was one of the many attempts to amalgamate two opposite aspirations of human nature. Man, by his consciousness of intellectual power, claims to have the right and also the capacity of forming a judgment upon anything and everything. On the other hand, the pious acquiescence in the will of a supernatural Being is not less an essential element in the constitution of human nature. Philosophy claimed to be self-sufficient, to be able to attain to truth by the sole agency of the intellect, without positing anything, without being directed and guided by any other authority. But the Europe of the Middle Ages believed in the doctrines of the Church as in something which it was not only sinful but also absolutely absurd to deny. The question whether their religion was in harmony or in conflict with reason was not asked. They reasoned rather in this way: The teachings of the Christian Church being true, and, on the other hand, reason being the sole arbiter of that which is true or untrue, therefore there could not possibly be a conflict between religion and reason. It was in this way that the doctrines of the Church were subjected to the test of reason; a major was posited which included everything, but not more than it was desired to prove. It was in this way that the first noteworthy scholastic philosopher, Johann Scotus Erigena, understood philosophy. To him philosophy and

religion, which latter meant true religion, which again meant his religion, the religion of his Church, were identical. When he seems to give the preference to reason over religion the preference is more apparent than real. He only ventures to do so because he is convinced that the doctrines of his religion as taught by the fathers of his Church are in perfect agreement with reason. He prefers reason because his trust in the truth of his religion is unbounded.

The authorities of the Church saw a danger in this. They took cognisance of the violence occasionally done by Scotus Erigena to ecclesiastical tenets for the sake of bringing them in harmony with his philosophy, or rather the philosophy of those who preceded him. They condemned his writings; they realised that several of their dogmas would stand in danger of being explained away and losing their meaning. Later scholastic philosophers were obliged to exempt certain doctrines from the ordeal of intellectual investigation. 'Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus excluded certain dogmas of their Church from their philosophical speculations. This process was extended; the Church narrowed more and more the circle within which it allowed the human intellect to disport itself. All theological questions of importance were at length excluded; only mere trivialities, the most inane questions, were allowed to occupy the by no means small intellects that were the pride of mediaeval Scholasticism. The latter came to be neither a philosophy nor a theology; it satisfied neither

the cravings of the pious nor the demands of the intelligent. Piety and intelligence both rose against Scholasticism, sometimes separately, sometimes with united efforts, till the structure of centuries tottered and fell, never to rise again. On the one hand, Humanism and the science of Nature were in opposition to the dialectical methods and metaphysical principles of Scholasticism, whilst piety endeavoured to gratify its spiritual longings after God and things divine by means of theosophical mysticism.

The way had been indicated long ago by Scotus Erigena, but the seeds he had sown, and which he himself had received from those who preceded him, did not bear fruit till at last mediaeval mysticism prevailed above all in Germany. It was not less opposed by the Catholic Church than certain aspects of Scholasticism had been. The first and, perhaps, the greatest of the German mystics, Master Eckhardt, who died in 1329, was persecuted for his doctrines. Eckhardt could not conceive the Deity without Universe and man. His speculations were founded on the writings of the alleged Areopagite Dionysius and Scotus Erigena. Eckhardt's theosophy was particularly congenial to the German mind. According to Eckhardt, nothing can be attributed to God which could not with greater reason be denied him. He is everything and nothing of everything. He has no existence because he is above existence. In this stage God is only the Godhead, non-personal, unknown to himself. He can only become known to himself by becoming united with

Nature and Form. From this self-conception is derived, first, the difference of persons in God as taught by the Christian Church in the doctrine of the Trinity; and, secondly, the revelation of God in a world. But he can only communicate himself; he is the essence of all things, he is void of all things. Things are only distinguished from God by nothingness.

I have said enough to show how to Eckhardt's mind all things coincide, how the *principium coincidentiae oppositorum* is the leading string in his theosophical speculations. Such mysticism, rooted in the Christian dogmas, in Neo-Platonism, and other ancient speculations suited the German mind. It was continued by others, especially by Nicholas Cusanus. The old idea of the harmony of contradictories (*coincidentia contradictorum*) was again put forward by him. He held that in God coincide all contrasts, even those of to be and not to be, of the finite and the infinite; that in him no contradiction is contradictory, no difference exists between the infinitely great and the infinitely small, between absolute motion and absolute rest, &c. &c.

Cusanus connected with his theosophical speculations the investigation of Nature and the study of mathematics. This new branch of cogitation and knowledge, physical philosophy, was zealously pursued by Theophrastus Paracelsus, whose contemporary, Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim of Cologne, propagated theories which exercised an influence even two hundred years after his death. Agrippa was born in 1487; he was thus

a younger contemporary of Reuchlin, whose part he took in the latter's famous controversy with the book-burners of Cologne. Agrippa, although an ardent opponent of Scholasticism and writing against the occult arts, practised magic himself. His theories were based on previous theosophical systems and on the Cabbala. He distinguishes between the divine, the heavenly, and the elemental worlds; he speaks of the world soul, the influence of the stars, of sympathy and antipathy, and of many other points of a similar nature.

We cannot therefore be surprised that Reuchlin, himself a Humanist and an opponent of Scholasticism, was a great admirer of the Cabbala and of Pythagorean doctrines. The theosophical and theological theories of his time once having taken a firm hold on his convictions, he was not the man to rest satisfied with merely adopting them without inquiring into their origin. For Reuchlin, in whatever he undertook, never contented himself with a useful mediocrity. Although not a theologian by profession, and remaining to his last days a staunch adherent of the Catholic faith and an opponent of that movement which ended in totally altering the convictions of a great portion of the Christian world, his personality was nevertheless of a decisive, though indirect, influence upon the origin and course of that revolt against Rome. As a lawyer he was one of the most learned of his craft; as a statesman he showed himself a skilled and, what is more, a successful negotiator. Honours were showered upon him; he was created a Count



Palatine, although he never assumed the title; he also held the legal profession in low esteem, as having only worldly interests for its object. His aspirations were of a loftier nature; he pined after truth, the mainspring and fountain-head of which he wished to reach. He refused to acquiesce in the evidence of others who declared a truth to emanate from a certain source. He would follow up for himself every stream and brooklet, every fall and course, to discover its origin. He pressed into the service of his explorations his vast achievements in the field of classical literature. For the same purpose he made himself acquainted with the philosophy of his time, with which, in pursuit of an impulse given by others, he connected the Jewish Cabbala. It was in this chase after truth, pure and unadulterated, that he discovered for Christian Europe a Hebrew and Rabbinical literature, which was henceforth to be an important branch of study at every higher seat of learning.

But in searching for truth he firmly believed it possible to find it. Like all great minds he doubted; as with all thinkers his doubts revolved within certain limits. On asking then what was the truth he wished to ascertain, we shall find that truth was to him neither more nor less than what it was to his contemporaries. Although he infinitely surpassed the latter in the means employed to reach the goal, yet his ultimate hopes went no farther than theirs. He considered as truth the religion in which he had been brought up, and the tenets of which he would

have held it sinful to doubt. Nor was his philosophy any other than that which was taught by his contemporaries. His peculiar notions about the occult properties of things, the magical forces, the harmony of contradictories, and of that which reason declares to be impossible, sufficiently show that as theologian and philosopher he was neither in advance of, nor behind his time. If as Humanist he must be grouped with Johann Wessel, Rudolph Agricola, Erasmus of Rotterdam, and Philip Melanchthon, he stands as philosopher and Christian between Nicolas Cusanus, who died when Reuchlin was nine years of age, and Agrippa von Nettesheim, who was born when Reuchlin had already attained the age of manhood.

Reuchlin was of opinion that as a sincere and consistent Christian he could not but at the same time believe in the mystical tenets of Christianity. His thoughts concerning the latter did not induce him to ask whether they were true according to the dictates of reason ; he did not try to ascertain whether they were deduced from some primary and simple principle. With him the question was only whether they were or were not historically attested ; whether they could stand the ordeal of scrutiny by the light of what he called history ; whether they were in accordance with that which he considered to be the Christian religion. But the Christian religion was based upon the traditions of the Jews. Reuchlin was persuaded that God had revealed himself primarily to the Jews ; that every truth, religious, moral, scientific, had been, in the first instance,

revealed to that people by direct divine inspiration. Whatever other nations could boast of in the way of knowledge and wisdom must have emanated from Hebrew sources; if the Greeks, if Pythagoras, have shown signs that they were possessed of treasures of wisdom, there must have been channels by which the stream of knowledge had been drawn from the Hebrew mainspring. The latter had therefore to be explored; the study of the Hebrew sources of knowledge was imperatively demanded. A knowledge of Hebrew and of the Rabbinical dialects was necessary, and no obstacles could deter Reuchlin from steadily pursuing his object.

The Cabbala showed him doctrines which resembled those of the supposed Areopagite, of Master Eckhardt, of Nicholas Cusanus—in short, of that theosophy which was in his day prevalent in Germany. The Cabbala had nothing in common with that Scholasticism which it became more and more the fashion to oppose, an opposition in which Reuchlin took an active part. But the Cabbala was a Jewish theosophy; it was a wisdom that had been treasured up by the Jews, by the people who by divine interference were the bearers of everything that was wise. Thus the tenets of the Cabbalá were in Reuchlin's eyes raised at once high above the wisdom which the Neo-Platonists and those who followed them were able to teach, for the wisdom of the latter could only be an imitation of the superior, of the really divine wisdom, preserved by the Jews. In the Cabbala Reuchlin thought to have found the fountain-head from which

all secular philosophy had emanated, the pure spring from which the turbid streams of Greek and Egyptian knowledge had issued.

But besides his theosophical views, another incentive to study Hebrew and the Rabbinical dialects was drawn from his religious convictions. Firm in his belief that the religion instilled in him from his infancy, the religion of the Christian Catholic Church, was the true religion, he endeavoured to find out and form for himself an opinion about the nature thereof, and the foundations on which that structure was based. Here again his doubts were historical and not metaphysical; and even these historical doubts moved within a narrow circle only. They stopped far short of an investigation of the acceptability of the doctrines taught by his Church; he would have considered the slightest doubt in that direction as rank heresy. To him it was the work of a bold and independent thinker to doubt the adopted interpretation of the Old and New Testament; to doubt whether the way in which the teachings of his Church were brought into harmony with the text of the Bible was the right way. This he considered an independent, unprejudiced investigation of the truth, and thus the study of Greek and Hebrew became to him a necessary of life.

Now if his theosophical views led him to believe that all things had some occult and mysterious properties beyond those perceptible to the senses, no wonder that he was greatly struck by that doctrine of the Cabbala that every word, every letter,

of the Hebrew Bible had an occult significance beyond the simple meaning of the text. If everything in nature had an occult meaning, how much more must this be the case with the words spoken by God himself for the purpose of [revealing to man all things superhuman and divine? He threw himself ardently into that kind of speculation; and by making use of an unrestrained freedom of transposing and combining letters and their numerical values, he managed to find in the Hebrew Bible everything he wished to establish. This was a new incentive to him to study Hebrew.

The necessity of learning Hebrew had already been felt by him when he was twenty years of age. At that time he composed a Latin dictionary, which was printed without his name under the title of *Vocabularius brevilocus*. Then already he expressed the conviction that we must appeal to the Hebrew book whenever a mistake in the Vulgate translation of the Old Testament was found. In this dictionary, which was based on older works, Reuchlin was under the necessity of quoting many a Hebrew word which he did not understand. Such parrot-like copying was repulsive to Reuchlin's nature.<sup>1</sup> It is true the translations of such words were given to him, but how was he to know that they were correct? He disliked using translations; even if correct, he compared them to wine that had been poured from cask to cask. His resolution to master the Hebrew language was probably taken at an early time, but

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 29 *sqq.*



he had to wait for twelve years longer before he was able to gratify his wish to some extent. For the study of Hebrew was at that time unknown in Christian Europe.

Reuchlin's education had not been neglected; he had acquired the rudiments of knowledge in his native town of Pforzheim, where he attended the Latin school. When he was fifteen years of age he went to the University of Freiburg, where the attention of the court was drawn to him by his beautiful voice. He became one of the choristers, and his personal acquaintance with the Margrave Frederick began in a most curious way. Papal nuncios had been sent to the court of the Margrave, and when they came to take leave and to receive their despatches, they were addressed by the High Chancellor. This was otherwise a good and clever man, but he had been born in Hechingen, and had transferred to his Latin the German pronunciation of his district. He began his address: "*Ceilsissimus et eilustrissumus naoster prainceps eintellexit,*" &c. The Italians were astonished; they did not understand a word. They protested not to be able to accept this as a despatch. In this embarrassment some one remembered that Reuchlin, the amanuensis of the Chancellor, could speak pure Latin. He was called, and carried on the discourse in a cultivated style, and gained great admiration. He became attached to the service of the Margrave, whom he accompanied on a journey to Rome in 1473. In 1474 he went to Basel. Here he met Lapidanus, with whom he had



previously been acquainted, and who was now professor at Basel. Reuchlin proceeded to study Greek under his guidance, perfected himself in grammar, and read Aristotle. He eagerly grasped the opportunity offered him here of learning Greek from Andronicus Contablaças, a native of Greece. From this circumstance originated that which was called in the schools the Reuchlinian mode of pronouncing Greek. He thought that his teacher, being a Greek himself, ought to be an authority on pronunciation. It was at Basel that Reuchlin composed his Latin Dictionary, which was indeed compiled from older works, chiefly from that of Papias, but in which he showed already that he was not to be a mere manufacturer of books, but that he promised to become an independent worker in the field of learning. After a few years he visited Paris for the second time and continued his Greek studies under the Greek George Hermonymos. But Reuchlin, not being rich, had to work for his support. He selected the legal profession for his career, went to Orleans, where, whilst studying Roman law, he supported himself by teaching Greek. For this purpose he composed in Greek a grammar of the Greek language. Having received at Poitiers his diploma as Licentiate of Civil Law, he left France and went to Tübingen in 1481.

Several reasons are given for his selection of Tübingen as his residence. The University at that town was renowned far and wide, it was near Reuchlin's native town of Pforzheim, and the court of the Count of Würtemberg was accessible

to men of learning. But besides these allurements I cannot help thinking that there was another magnet that attracted him thither. This magnet was the study of the Hebrew language.

There can be no doubt that already at that time he was bent upon studying Hebrew. But such a wish, easily as it was conceived, was difficult of execution. Reuchlin's great contemporaries, Johann Wessel, who himself knew a little Hebrew, and Rudolph Agricola, rather discouraged him; but this did not deter a man of Reuchlin's persistency. The fact is, there were no teachers, hardly any books, and nothing in the shape of a grammar or dictionary accessible to Reuchlin. He could not employ Jews, because in a number of German States no Jews were permitted to dwell; and some Jews thought it wrong to teach Hebrew to a non-Jew. Although as a good Christian he sincerely wished that all Jews might be induced to become Christians, he somehow or other felt strong dislike to the baptized Jews he came across. It is true the Council of Vienna had decreed in 1312 that chairs for Hebrew be erected in Paris, Oxford, Salamanca, and Boulogne, but the decree remained almost a dead letter. Now it happened that at the time when Reuchlin terminated his studies in France, there were in Tübingen two theologians who had the reputation of knowing Hebrew, namely, Conrad Summenhardt and Paul Scriptoris. When we consider the doggedness with which Reuchlin persisted in his determination to master the Hebrew language we

are led to believe that the presence of these two men in Tübingen was one of the inducements that caused Reuchlin to settle there.

Whether these two scholars were of much use to Reuchlin is another question. We may safely assume that Reuchlin had, by his own perseverance, gained some knowledge of Hebrew, which, infinitesimally small as it may have been, must have equalled, if not surpassed, that of those two professors. There is a circumstance which, I think, enables us to gauge the extent of their Hebrew knowledge.

There lived at that time a man called [Conrad Pellican] a clergyman, a man of learning, who became at a later period a friend and follower of Zwingli. From his knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew he was called by Thomas Murner, in his *Kirchendieb- und Ketzer Kalender* (Calendar of Church Robbers and Heretics), an observant, recalcitrant heretic, and an apostate in three languages.<sup>1</sup> When he first conceived the wish of learning Hebrew he had the good luck of coming across a commentary of [Nicholas de Lira] to some books of the Hebrew Bible. He tries to read the Hebrew words by means of the Latin transcription, puts to memory the letters of such words, by these means learns the alphabet, and practises reading by the recurrence of the same letters in other words. After a year he obtains a Hebrew Bible, and composes a small grammar,

<sup>1</sup> *Das Chronikon des Konrad Pellican . . . herausgegeben durch Bernhard Rüggenbach*, Basel, 1877, p. xxii.

*"De modo legendi et intelligendi Hebraea,"* which according to some was printed in 1503. In his autobiography he tells us that he was vexed at not being able to find, except in rare instances, the first person of the present indicative, which he supposed to be the stem of the verb, like in Latin, *amo, lego, audio*: "Sed dolebat mihi valde non inveniri in verbis, nisi raro, primam personam praesentis indicativi ut est apud latinos thema: *amo, lego, audio.*" After some time he happened to meet Reuchlin, to whom he communicated the difficulty, and who of course at once told him where to look for the roots of verbs. "Tunc subridens humanissimus Doctor Reuchlin dicebat, apud Hebraeos thema verborum non esse primam personam nec indicativi, nec imperativi, sed tertiam singularem praeteriti perfecti." Pellican adds: "*hac regula accepta exultavi in animo, sciens huiusmodi verbo impleta Biblia.*"<sup>1</sup>

Now it is known that Pellican had been assisted in his work by Conrad Summenhardt and Paul Scriptoris, and we can conclude how unsatisfactory the knowledge of these two professors must have been.

If Reuchlin had some hopes of getting information from them he must soon have been undeceived. He proceeded to pursue his studies on his own account, but with little success. It is true he was already, in 1483, praised for his knowledge of Hebrew, but who can tell with how much

<sup>1</sup> *L.c.*, p. 19.

justice? He had no Hebrew Bible. The first copy was printed in Italy in 1488; Reuchlin asked a friend to procure him a copy, but it is not known whether the latter was successful.

But his craving for receiving instruction in Hebrew was at length to be gratified. His master Eberhard with the Beard sent Reuchlin to the Emperor to obtain the latter's sanction to an enlargement of his territory. It was on this occasion that Reuchlin and his brother were ennobled by the Emperor and received the [dignity of Counts Palatine]. It was on this occasion that Reuchlin became acquainted with the Emperor's Jewish body physician, (Jacob Jehiel Loans,) who occupied an honoured position at the court and became Reuchlin's teacher of Hebrew. Reuchlin never assumed the title conferred upon him by the Emperor, but always remained plain Johann Reuchlin; but the acquaintance with Loans was always considered by him as one of the happiest events of his life. A blind man who had been groping in the dark for years, when by a happy accident the light of heaven dawned upon him, would not rejoice more than Reuchlin did when the portals of the divine truth were widely opened before him. In the same year that Columbus added a new world to the one within whose limits mankind had been hitherto confined, Reuchlin disclosed to Christian Europe a new language and literature.<sup>1</sup> Reuchlin never forgot, nor was he ever ashamed

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Laney, *Johann Reuchlin, eine Skizze*, p. 24.



to own, how much he was indebted to Loans; he quotes him in subsequent books as "praeceptor meus mea sententia valde doctus homo J. J. Loans Hebraeus," or "praeceptor meus ille J. J. Loans doctor excellens." Eight years later, when he had made considerable progress in Hebrew, he writes to Loans a Hebrew letter, in which he informs him that after they had parted he had succeeded in successfully continuing his Hebrew studies, a fact at which his master no doubt would greatly rejoice. He writes:

שלום שלום לרחוק ולקרוב אדוני ר' יעקב אלופי ומיודעי: ממני המשתוקק והנכסף לחוות פניך הנעימים להתענג מזיו פניך המאירות לשמוע למודך הטהור: ועתה באתי במגלת ספר להודיעך כי שבת לאל אחרי נסעי ממך הצלחתי בלמודי והגעתי בהשגה גדולה: ידעתי תשמח ותגיל • אני יוחנן רוחלין מפורצן הכותב ראש חודש כסלו שבת הרסא: ליד הנכבד ר' יעקב בכמר יחיאל לואנש. (1 Nov. 1500)

Now that the gates of this branch of learning were opened to him, he passed with gigantic strides over the whole field. Having successfully concluded his mission, he left the court loaded with honours which he little esteemed, and took up his residence at Heidelberg, where he became Agricola's successor as keeper of the library of Johann Dalburg, Bishop of Worms. He also became councillor of Philip, Elector of the Palatinate, and chief censor (*Zuchtmeister*) of his sons. He had perfected himself in Hebrew, continued his Cabbalistic studies, and published in 1494 his work *De Verbo mirifico*, which contains



many quotations, but yet does not display any particular knowledge of Hebrew, as almost all quotations could be accounted for as having been derived from secondary sources. His "wonderful word" consists of the letters י, ה, ש, ו, ה, in which he blended together the Hebrew name of the Deity with three letters of the name יהו (Jeshua). He ascribed many mystical properties to that word, which is frequently to be found on the title-pages of his books. At Heidelberg he wished to give lessons in Hebrew, but the monks prevented him. This need not surprise us, for they also disliked the study of Greek. When Reuchlin's brother, Dionysius, who had been educated at his expense, became magister in Tübingen in 1494, he was to occupy the first chair in Greek at that University. But the monks put difficulties in his way. The Elector repeatedly writes to them to allow Dionysius to lecture, but it was of no use; they refused to give him a college room. At that time Philip's son was to marry a lady who stood to him in such a degree of consanguinity that a papal dispensation was required. Moreover Philip himself was at that time excommunicated for withholding some revenues of the monks. Reuchlin was sent to Rome to set matters right. This was his third journey to Rome. His negotiations were again successful; but being retained for a whole year, he employed his time in further adding to his knowledge of Hebrew by taking instruction from Rabbi Obadiah Sforno, who was a classical scholar, a physician, a philosopher, and a Cabbalist. Reuchlin, at the

same time, tried to obtain Hebrew books. He never ceased learning, and even as late as 1516 he wished to take lessons in Chaldaean from Johann Potkin, the same who had instructed Petrus Galatinus, one of the most shameless plagiarists that ever lived.<sup>1</sup>

Reuchlin's work, *De Rudimentis Hebraicis*, appeared in March 1506. He was very proud of this work, and on the last page he puts the verse of Horace, "exegi monumentum aere perennius." The work is divided into three books. The first two contain the dictionary, and the third the grammar. The dictionary is a close imitation of Rabbi David Kimchi's ספר השרשים, the first edition of which was printed in 1480. Kimchi's work was written in Rabbinical Hebrew, in a concise style. Reuchlin's arrangement differs from that of Kimchi only in a few points. The words are arranged according to the roots, but while Kimchi places the quadralitera at the end of every letter, Reuchlin embodies them between the trilitera.

Reuchlin gives the proper nouns, which were omitted by Kimchi. Kimchi places the Chaldaean words of the Bible at the end, and Reuchlin puts them with the Hebrew words. Sometimes it would appear as if Reuchlin's dictionary contained more articles than that of Kimchi; the fact is that he

<sup>1</sup> For the following short survey of Reuchlin's books on Hebrew grammar, compare Ludwig Geiger, *Johann Reuchlin, Sein Leben und seine Werke*; and *Das Studium der Hebräischen Sprache*.

sometimes dissolves the latter's articles into four, and even into six parts. The quotations are those of Kimchi, which Reuchlin corrects only occasionally. On the whole, it may be said that Reuchlin closely followed Kimchi, although other Jewish authors are also utilised by him. He quotes the Massorah, which must have been no easy task to him, for he had to glean those enigmatical annotations from manuscripts. He quotes the מורה נבוכים of Maimonides, whom he calls R. Moyses Aegyptius, the כחרי of R. Jehudah Halevy, and occasionally Nachmanides, Gersonides, and Cabbalistic writers. He quotes copiously from Rashi, who is to him *ordinarius scripturae interpretes*. His quotations from Rashi he had at first-hand, and not from Nicholas de Lira's commentaries, for he says that if he were to strike out from De Lira's works all that the latter had taken from Rashi, only a few pages would remain. He had a much higher opinion of Paulus Burgensis. Of the fathers of the Church he quotes Jerome most frequently: we must not forget that he had always taken the latter as a sort of model, whose life he was desirous of imitating. In the greater number of cases Reuchlin adopts his opinions, but he is sometimes surprised at his interpretations. Of Augustine he says once, "Augustinus, nescio quo somno motus." Not less cavalierly he treats the Vulgate, of which he says once, "Nescio quid blaxterat," and again, "Nescio quid nostra translatio somniavit"; and he complains of the many defects of that translation. He kept all along steadfast to a principle laid down by him elsewhere: "Quam-

quam enim Hieronymum sanctum veneror ut angelum et Lyram colo ut magistrum, tamen adoro veritatem ut deum." Besides the authorities mentioned, he made use of the Septuagint, Symmachus, Theodotion, Aquila, and the Chaldaean versions. His Arabic quotations are from Kimchi; he knew no Syriac, and it is doubtful whether he studied Arabic at a later period. He illustrates some statements by examples from Greek and Latin, and even from German idioms. He shows hardly anything of Bible criticism in the modern sense of the word.

The third part of his *Rudimenta* is devoted to grammar. It is the first work of its kind. Reuchlin's object is to help the reader to an independent and grammatically intelligent reading of the Bible, and not to teach how to write Hebrew. He is very much afraid his readers might endeavour to read the Hebrew the wrong way. He therefore gives the

#### CANON.

"Non est liber legendus hic ceu ceteri  
Faciem sinistra dextera dorsum tene  
Et de sinistra paginas ad dexteram  
Quascumque verte. Quae Latina vides  
Legito latine, hebraea si sit insita  
A dextera legenda sunt sinistrorsum."

And in the dedicatory epistle to his brother Dionysius he gives the same directions.

The work is very elementary. As a reading exercise he

gives the “genealogia Mariae virginis” in Hebrew. Strange to say, this genealogy astonished John Fisher so much that he asked Erasmus to inquire from Reuchlin whence he had taken it. He discusses the consonants and their properties, the vowels, diphthongs, the **שוא**. His rules are ample and diffuse; he recapitulates them and intersperses them with words of encouragement to the student. He analyses every word, every syllable quoted. He treats on the noun and its genders and declension; on the pronouns, the numerals, the preposition **מן** when used as ablative. He admonishes his reader to find the root of every word, be it ever so compound, and illustrates this by showing how it would have to be done in Latin in the words *hae inhonorificabilitudines*. For the verb he uses as paradigms **פעל** and **פקד**. Instead of Kal, Piel, &c., he speaks of the first, the second conjugation, &c., with their passive voices, and thus, assuming an active and a passive Hithpaël, he has four conjugations with their passives. The irregular verb follows, then the quadralitera, the verb with suffixes, a short syntax, the prepositions, and, at last, the rule of the vav conversive as given him by Loans. His chief source is again Kimchi in his **ספר מכלל**. But he also quotes Moses Kimchi, Ibn Ezra, Ibn Ganach, and a **ספר שכל טוב** by Moyses Zejag. The book was really written by Moses Kimchi, but the MS. contained at the end a notice that the book had been sold to Moses Ziug, and Reuchlin mistook him for its author. He calls Gabirol, the Avicbron of the scholastic philosophers, Moses instead of



Solomon. On the whole, it can be said that none of these quotations are at first-hand.

The work was not a success from a business point of view. In 1510 there were still 750 copies on hand. The bookseller, Amorbach of Basel, complained to Reuchlin that the book did not sell. Reuchlin told him to wait, in time he would make great profit by it, "for," Reuchlin added, "if I live, the Hebrew language must come out; should I die, the opening is made."

Reuchlin had particularly turned his attention to the literature of the Rabbis. He wanted to obtain a copy of the Talmud, but without success. In 1510 he wrote that he would like to pay the price for a copy of the Talmud twice over, but he had not yet been able to obtain one. In 1512 he bought the treatise of *Sanhedrin*. The manuscript, which is now in the library at Carlsruhe, has some notes from his hand. He quotes once from this treatise; his other quotations from the Talmud are not original. In the division of the Talmud he follows the mistake of some of his predecessors that the Talmud had four parts, the first treating of feasts and ceremonies, the second of herbs and seeds, the third of matrimonial laws, and the fourth of civil and criminal law. If he had ever possessed a copy of the whole Talmud he would certainly have corrected that error.

In 1512 he published the seven so-called penitential psalms (vi., xxxii., xxxviii., li., cii., cxxx., cxliii.), with a translation and commentary. It was the first Hebrew text printed in Germany.



His explanations are most elementary, and the book was written in such a clear and easy style that Sebastian Munster said at a later period that a child of seven might learn Hebrew from it. His authorities are again the Jewish authors Rashi, Ibn Ezra, the Kimchis, Nachmanides, and the Targumim. In Psalm li. 6 he would fain prefer the plain meaning of the words למען חצוק ברברך to the translation given in the letter to the Romans iii. 4. He excuses this boldness by a quotation from Hieronymus, "quod frequenter annotavimus apostolos et evangelistas non iisdem verbis usos esse in testamenti veteris exemplis quibus in propriis voluminibus continentur." In the dedicatory epistle to Jacob Lemp he says that his Rudimenta would not display their full usefulness as long as there were not more Hebrew Bibles to hand. He had hoped that a great number of Bibles or other Hebrew books would come to Germany, but the Emperor Maximilian's wars in Italy had made it impossible. The Pfefferkorn braggarts had promised to print Hebrew books, but they did not keep their promise. Less elementary and diffuse was his translation and commentary of Ps. cx.-cxiv., but the book was never printed.

He also published in the same year a translation of the poem קערת כסף, *The Silver Bowl*, of Joseph Ezobi (Hyssopæus), whom he calls *poetam dulcissimum*, and in the preface he says that he had formerly thought that Hebrew was unsuitable for poetical composition, but that this poem had taught him that he had been mistaken. Ezobi's poem has found much favour

among Christian scholars. It was also translated by Mercerus, and both the original and the two translations were reproduced by Wolf in his *Bibliotheca*.<sup>1</sup>

In 1518 Reuchlin issued his work *De accentibus et Orthographia linguae Hebraicae*. When he wrote his commentary on the penitential psalms he was already thinking of writing this work. In the preface he says he dedicated the book to the Cardinal Adrianus, "to give the youth, bent upon studying languages, a leader under whose banner they would be able to fight, if need be, with those ferocious and rabid dogs who hated all good arts; against the disease and pestilence of everything old; against the burners of books who thirsted for the destruction and extermination of the most ancient monuments. As an old man he might cease to teach elements of grammar, fit only for children and young people, but his zeal for the spread of the study of Hebrew makes him forget all objections." It is very rare for Reuchlin thus to allude in his learned books to his cruel and relentless persecutors.

The work is divided into three books. The first book he calls מַעַם; it treats on pronunciation. Taking the root פִּעַל for his paradigm he gives all possible forms of words with indication of the מַלְעִיל and מַלְרַע; but for words with suffixes he takes פִּקֵּר instead of פִּעַל. Every word is accompanied by a quotation from

<sup>1</sup> An excellent English translation of *The Silver Bowl*, by the Rev. J. Freedman, appeared, concurrently with the present article, in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, April 1899 (vol. viii. p. 534 sqq.).

the Bible where it occurs. He gives the noun with all suffixes, the prepositions, some pronouns, the verbs with and without suffixes.

The second book he calls *מתן*, for the proper use of which he gives twenty-seven rules. He speaks of the *דגש* and of the difference between *ש' ימן* and *ש' שמאל*. He call these signs rhetorical accents, governing a rhetorical metre.

The third book he calls *ננינה*. He says that it was an ancient custom of the Hebrews to devote songs to God, and refers to the example of Moses. This custom had survived even to his days, and was a daily custom in the synagogue. He enumerates the accents, and translates their names into Latin. He then explains them, and discusses their value. He confesses that in all this he followed the Rabbis. At the end he gives the tunes of each accent as they were and are still chanted in the synagogues. There is something curious in this musical transcription. Firstly, the notes, while written in the musical notation of his time, run, however, like Hebrew, from right to left. But in his zeal he displays an excess of lucidity which caused much obscurity. In the synagogue the chanting is done by the reader only, and there is never a chorus. Reuchlin thought of a performance by choristers, and arranged the tunes for four voices; namely, the discant (treble), the alto, the tenor, and the bass. Contrary to modern custom, the tenor contains the melody, which thus appears in the middle of the harmony. Moreover, the accents being given

# Discantus

זרקא סגול מונח רביעי

מחבר בשטט זקת קטן צדק דרגא חביר

# Bassus

זרקא סגול מונח רביעי

מחבר בשטט זקת קטן צדק דרגא חביר

# Altus

זרקא סגול מונח רביעי

מחבר בשטט זקת קטן צדק דרגא חביר

# Tenor

זרקא סגול מונח רביעי

מחבר בשטט זקת קטן צדק דרגא חביר



in the order of the "*Zarka* table," the harmony does not always place a musical close on just those accents which demand it. Now I am told by the Rev. Francis Cohen that what happened was this. Some writers on mediaeval music thought, first, that the melody was contained in the dis-cant' (soprano), and not in the tenor; secondly, that they had to read the notes from left to right; and thirdly, that the latter presented one consecutive melody. It is not surprising therefore that, after much trouble, they could make nothing of it.

The book on the Hebrew accents was the last of Reuchlin's large works. But he was not satisfied with learning himself and writing books, and, having written them, leaving them to their fate. With him the propagation of the study of Hebrew was the great object of his life. Though this study was not the cause of the bitter persecutions he had to undergo at the hands of the firebrands of Cologne, it was used by them as a weapon with which to strike at him. But neither this nor anything else caused him to waver. He persuaded many students to take up the study of Hebrew. The influence he exercised in this direction was enormous. There were many who wished to learn, but the question was, how was it to be accomplished? The Universities were useless. In 1510 Reuchlin petitioned the Emperor, "for the sake of God and the Christian faith, to effect that at every German University two professors of Hebrew be appointed for ten years, and that the Jews be compelled to lend



Hebrew books against good securities for this purpose, till such a time as the Christians would provide for themselves printed and written books." But ten years elapsed before a beginning of that kind was made. Numbers of young people came to Reuchlin to learn, others consulted him in writing on difficult points, which he always was ready to answer. Such letters of inquiry he even received from monks and soldiers. Among his followers was a young Englishman, Richard Crokus, the author of some books, who wrote to him that he was always at Reuchlin's service, and asked him to dedicate his next Cabalistic work to John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester. John Fisher removed to Michael House in Cambridge, now embodied in Trinity College, in 1484; he was elected Master of his college in 1495. He was chaplain of Margaret, Countess of Richmond, the mother of Henry VII. In 1501 he became Doctor of Divinity, in the following year he was appointed Professor of Divinity, and in 1504 he became Bishop of Rochester. When Reuchlin was so bitterly persecuted by his slandering tormentors of Cologne, he asked Erasmus to put his case before the English scholars, who only knew the reports spread by his Cologne enemies. But Reuchlin was mistaken. The English scholars admired him greatly, especially Thomas More and John Fisher. The latter was one of Reuchlin's great admirers; he took his part in the controversy, sent him tokens of esteem, admonished him to persevere, and expressed a wish of making a journey for the sole purpose of seeing Reuchlin and

conversing with him. The authors of the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*, pretending to inveigh against the influx of foreign students, which, they thought, was flooding the University of Leipsic, thus allude to the aforesaid Crokus in their satirical imitation of the monkish dog-Latin of the day: "Et est alius hic, qui etiam legit in Graeco, vocatus Richardus Crocus, et venit ex Anglia. Ego dixi nuper: Diabolus, venit iste ex Anglia? Ego credo, quod, si esset unus poeta ibi, ubi piper crescit, ipse etiam veniret Leiptzick." Crokus was a good scholar, and certainly did not deserve such quizzing. But we know that all blame contained in those *epistolæ* was meant for praise.

Obsolete as Reuchlin's works are at the present day, his boast that "he had erected for himself a monument more imperishable than bronze" is true to the letter. He was as good as his word, "that the study of Hebrew must come out," and he was, after all, as he said himself, the first. The study of Hebrew in Christian Europe commenced with him, was taken up by his immediate successors, and has never since been relinquished. I cannot dwell on the vigour of his mind and his powers of application, as shown by the fact that he could unswervingly pursue the study of Hebrew, and zealously work for its propagation at a time when he was engaged with delicate political negotiations, with legal affairs, with theological and philosophical, or rather theosophical subjects, with the study of Greek and Roman authors; at a time when he had to sustain a

struggle of life and death against unscrupulous and influential persecutors. This struggle alone would have been enough to weigh down the energies of any man less richly endowed by nature, less earnest in the fulfilment of his duties, than Reuchlin. As I said before, it was my duty to dwell on the least interesting phase of Reuchlin's life. Reuchlin has many claims on the gratitude of later generations, but this one portion of his activity, his discovery of Hebrew learning, would have been sufficient to secure for him the regard of posterity. It was through Reuchlin that Germany can boast that one of her children disclosed a Hebrew and Rabbinical literature to Christian Europe.

It might not have been so. If circumstances had at one time been more favourable, that privilege might have fallen to the lot of England. It will always be a cause of regret to every friend of learning and science, and particularly to a loyal and patriotic Englishman, that the vast erudition and patient researches of Roger Bacon were destined to remain without influence upon the history of civilisation. Although naturally of quite different disposition and intellectual formation, yet was there much in common between Roger Bacon and Johann Reuchlin. Both of them were induced by the very same instincts to occupy themselves with the study of Hebrew. It is noteworthy that in this respect some observations made by Bacon and by Reuchlin are almost identical to the letter. Both believed in a mysterious and spiritual meaning

of every word of the Bible beyond the one which appeared on the surface. Both held that all knowledge, all philosophy, had been revealed by God to the Jews, and was transferred by the latter to the other nations. Bacon held that Joseph had instructed the Egyptian princes and elders, that Moses had known the Egyptian wisdom, that Solomon had been the greatest philosopher, that medicine was invented by the sons of Adam and Noah. Like Reuchlin, he made use of Jewish instructors, he complained of the difficulty of getting even the most indispensable books, he complained of the ignorance which caused words that were in reality Hebrew to be derived from Latin or Greek roots. He had the same aversion as Reuchlin to translations, even to correct ones, and, almost in the same words as Reuchlin, he declared "that it was sweeter to drink water from the very source than from turbid pools, and that the wine from the first vat was purer and more wholesome and of better quality than after it had been poured from vessel to vessel." He, equally with Reuchlin, distrusted translations, even those translations of the Bible which enjoyed the sanction of his Church. He mentions that Jerome occasionally put down an erroneous version so as not to irritate the crowd, who considered him a falsifier of the text on account of his novel translation of certain passages. He complains of the prevalent ignorance of Hebrew, and that the knowledge of that language, possessed by a few, was only mechanical, without any insight into Hebrew grammar. Bacon himself professed

to be a good Hebrew scholar, and he asserts that he was able to teach Hebrew to any diligent and zealous pupil, so as to enable the latter to read and understand Holy Writ and the ancient sages, and everything appertaining to the interpretation of such writings, and all this within three days. In this respect Bacon differed considerably from Reuchlin, who said that the student commenced to master Hebrew only when he had reached the stage of despair and was on the point of throwing up the study of Hebrew as an impossible task. It is a pity that the Hebrew Grammar which Roger Bacon is supposed to have written does not now exist—if it ever existed. It was the fate of this wonderful man that all the discoveries he made in so many branches of knowledge should die with him, and remain without effect upon the development of learning. This was also the case with his study of Hebrew, and that which in another age and under different circumstances might have been brought about by Roger Bacon was left to be accomplished by Johann Reuchlin.

## ISRAEL—A NATION

(AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE ZIONIST CONFERENCE HELD AT THE  
CLERKENWELL TOWN HALL, LONDON, ON MARCH 6, 1898)

THE Chovevi Zion Association of England has invited you to its first general Conference in order to discuss some of the practical measures to be taken by us in view of the present state of Zionism. It is obvious that the drawing up of a Zionist programme presents many difficulties, and requires careful consideration, and the question whether the National Idea should form a part thereof is of really practical, and not merely academical significance.

Zionism is the great factor that agitates the Jewish mind at the present moment. The atmosphere is charged with it. It is attacked as injurious by some ; it is defended by others as one of the worthiest objects a Jew can realise. It has already a considerable literature of its own, and there is no Jewish newspaper that could possibly ignore its existence, whatever shade of opinion it may represent. The interest roused by Zionism is felt outside immediate Jewish circles, and English and continental dailies, weeklies, and monthlies make it a subject of discussion.

It may be as well to declare at the outset what we mean by



this Zionism, for there' are some Jews who attach a meaning to the word Zion contrary to that which is uppermost in our minds. There are some Jews to whom such expressions as Zion, Jerusalem, Restoration are only figurative names—metaphors to represent the universal spread of the religious idea of Israel. The word Zion is to them a mere spiritualisation, a poetical form to symbolise certain ideas, an allegory, obscurely conceived and verging on mysticism. It is therefore necessary, before going any farther, to make it clear that these notions are not ours. We, who with our brethren abroad call ourselves Chovevi Zion, lovers of Zion, Zionists, consider Zion as a living fact, a living organisation. Zion is to us a divinely created existence on earth, well defined and palpable, like our own human existence. Once Zion was the seat whence radiated the purest and sublimest bestowals of the human soul, and we are convinced that it will yet again be the centre where the loftiest truths will manifest themselves. Zionism comprises our hopes of the regeneration of our race, and of the re-establishment of Israel upon its ancient soil.

It is thus evident that this means the re-establishment of our national existence, and that, from our point of view, it is superfluous to say that the National Idea is a part of the Zionist programme. In fact, I doubt whether "Nationalism in Zionism" is not tautology.

But we wish to be well understood, and to make our intentions known in a manner excluding doubt and ambiguity.

It is our firm resolve to work, as far as lies in our power, towards realising the hopes of restoration that have never ceased to stir the heart of the Jew ever since he was first driven from his native soil. The Holy Land is to us both matter and spirit, and we wish to regain it. This is our object broadly put; any differences that may exist between Zionist and Zionist touch only questions of detail, of procedure. Zionists may differ among themselves as to the practical steps that ought to be taken, but on the main issue we are all of one mind. We all strive towards the same end. Whether prompted by our national instincts only, or by purely religious motives, or by impatience of enduring slights or oppression, or by homing instincts that draw us, like pigeons, irresistibly to the ancient soil, or by that indefinable sentiment which consists of these feelings combined, and of several kindred feelings, which together form that one powerful sentiment which is termed "Zionism," and which, like many other domineering sentiments, defies psychological analysis—the object we all have in view is one and the same.

This being so, how is it possible to sever the National Idea from the Zionist programme? How possible to deprive an organisation of its vital parts? And what reasons should induce us to part with our national aspirations? I know that numerous objections are raised against the advisability and propriety of bringing our nationalistic ideas to the front, but none of such objections touch the point at issue. We are asked to discard our national consciousness, but we should ask first:

Can we? The question "whether the Jews should strive to be a nation" is an idle question; the question to be considered: "*Are the Jews a nation?*" Do the Jews form a well-defined group of humanity with characteristics that defy obliteration, that keep them united in the face of much discord, that constitute a bond of union in spite of dissensions on many a question of religion, that brave the effects of dispersion, and set at naught the lower impulses of utilitarianism and expediency? Once it is clear that such distinctiveness exists, once this existence — be it racial, be it national — is well established, all objections derived from outside motives become absolutely devoid of meaning. If Jewish nationalism exists, it is our bounden duty to acknowledge it.

Now, how can it possibly be denied that the Jews constitute a nation? I shall not dwell on the minute psychological traits that are hardly observable by the naked eye, and a number of which combine in the composition of a national body. It is enough for our purpose to know that those distinguishing marks through which nation differs from nation according to the most rough-and-ready estimate, are extant in greater numbers in our Jewish nation than in any other of those that exist at the present day.

What we Jews all over the world have in common is our ancient religion, our associations with our ancient land, our ancient language, or sacred literature, our glorious and unique history, and our descent. Which other nation at the present

day can show such a combination of so many elements of cohesion? No one will dispute that the English form as a nation a strongly marked unit, but even a superficial glance will show that they cannot vie with our race either in the number or the intensity of these typical features. It might be objected that the English are undoubtedly in possession of their land; but is it more than a mere association with the mother-country that knits together the English of India, of Canada and Australia, and are they any less English for this?

We have our common descent. There are some who, in their opposition to our national aspirations, aver that our descent is not of that unalloyed purity that we would fain believe in. Without discussing the point itself, so much is true that whatever elements may have been grafted upon the ancient stock have been unable to modify it to any perceptible degree, but that those elements themselves were absorbed and modified so as to become lost in the original stock. This circumstance would all the more bring out its power of resistance to amalgamation with outside elements and its own amalgamative power over extraneous infusions. However this may be, our descent is certainly more homogeneous than that of the English nation. And yet, we see in the English that same chemical absorption of foreign additions constantly at work. I ask you, is this power of absorption a sign of weakness, or is it a sign of strength of English nationalism?

I abstain from mentioning, as one of the features that weld

together our national existence, the fact that throughout the centuries of our dispersion we have been a thorn in the side of other nations, and that our history is to a great extent one long chain of persecution and degradation. I do not name this as one of the causes of our national individuality, simply because I do not believe it to be so. I do not admit that Jewish nationalism is the product of persecution. I deny that the Jewish nationalism of the present day is the fruit of anti-Semitism. I do not believe that one of the main objects of our movement consists in combating anti-Semitism. All such motives, powerful as I admit them to be, are only external. The root of Jewish nationalism lies in the fact that Israel is a people, a nation. Its national consciousness forces itself to the front; it seeks the light, however deep it may sometimes be buried under the stony soil wherewith the vicissitudes of the times cover it. It breaks forth and asserts its influence, persecution or no persecution, and *doctrinaire* repudiation by some of its own members is powerless to subdue it. To say that the hard knocks we always have been and still are receiving have acted and act as so many stimulants, rousing us to cling all the more tenaciously to our nationalism, is, I think, a fallacy; it certainly is no more than an arbitrary assumption. There are plenty of instances in history of nations which, so far from being roused by such stimulants, succumbed to them and were wiped off from the face of the earth. Our Jewish nationalism is of sterner stuff; it has stood attacks that annihilated others,

and would shine all the more brilliantly if the condition of the Jews were brighter. It would assert itself in prosperity with much greater force than it ever evinced in adversity, and the great national upheaval of the present day is due to some extent to anti-Semitism, but much more to certain favourable prospects of the realisation of its objects, which have never offered themselves before.

In this estimate of anti-Semitism as a motor in the present Zionist movement I differ from many Zionists; I certainly differ in this respect from our opponents who would fain recognise in anti-Semitism the sole cause of Zionism. These anti-Zionists believe that the National Idea is a modern invention. They aver that the general idea of nationalism is not older than the French Revolution; that it was not before the end of the last century that it became a war-cry, and that up to that time the term "nation" was, as a writer tersely puts it, no more than a mere word in the dictionary. And now, our opponents say, "You nationalising Jews are no more than mere imitators. Goaded by anti-Semitism, you grasp at the new word, adapt it to your own case, and hug the idea that you are restoring some old inherent factor of Judaism." Such reasoning is altogether unsound; the term "nation" may be modern as a war-cry, but the conception is as old as the human race. There has never been a time when the nations were not inspired by national consciousness, which they upheld, and for which they shed their blood. The new name did not create a new natural



impulse in the human heart. The whole argument reminds me of the man in the play whom somebody took the trouble to instruct as to the difference between poetry and prose. The man who had never heard these terms before was astonished to find that he had been talking prose all his life long. He did not, however, go so far as to say that he was only now commencing to talk, like those who imagine that the National Idea became a factor in the life of the peoples for the first time when certain eternal impulses commenced to be designated by that name.

But, fallacious as the whole argument is in regard to other nations, there is not a shadow of truth in it when applied to the Jews. To us the word "nation" has had, ever since the commencement of our existence, that broad meaning which the European nations attached to it possibly not longer than a century ago. From the time that God took us as a nation out of the midst of another nation up to the present day, the National Idea has been alive within us; we had the substance, and we had the word. There is no period in our history, and hardly a passage in our sacred or our post-Biblical literature, that does not force this conviction upon us. The National Idea is the never-failing source of inspiration in our prayers. The prayer of the eighteen blessings, recited on ordinary occasions three times every day, can only be understood in the light of our expected restoration as a nation. At every Jewish wedding one of the blessings pronounced represents

Zion as a childless woman who will yet rejoice in the assembly of her sons, whilst another of these blessings records the Biblical promise that the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem would yet resound with mirth and gladness, with the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride. That nuptial blessing, in which the figure of the childless woman allegorically denotes Zion and Jerusalem, contrasts curiously with the theory of those Jews who have in our days set up the dogma of an exclusively spiritual Zionism, which they sometimes call, quite in keeping with their *doctrinaire* dogmatism, "true" Zionism.

These Jews will have nothing to do with our Zionistic hopes, which they denounce as being a material and physical Zionism—which is certainly true, and as devoid of all spiritualisation—which is a gratuitous imagination of their own. Examples from history and Scripture are lost upon them. Expressions like Zion, People, Nation, Restoration, do not trouble them, for they say that both in Biblical and post-Biblical times these were only allegorical expressions. You cannot quote Scripture to them. Lessing said that quoting Scripture "silences, but does not convince." It does not even silence. Once you set up the theory that Zion and Jerusalem do not mean Zion and Jerusalem, but something else, the way is smooth. Still it must sometimes be rather awkward in studying the books of the prophets or reading the Psalms. It must be difficult to sustain at every step this cold, allegorising intellec-

tuality at the sacrifice of the deep human pathos, the divine spark of true humanity in its most exalting conception. And on meeting such lofty examples of patriotism as Esther and Ezra, they expect us to stigmatise them as instances of objectionable particularism. How many are there among you who do not see that such theories are only theories of the school, that they have nothing in common with the real history of Jewish life, with the one people as it was created by the one God, with the remnant of the one people, of the imperishable one people, that has always proclaimed, and ever will proclaim, God to be one? Who is going to believe that the national yearnings of our prayers are only meant allegorically, that their literal application is only a modern invention: that our fathers and mothers, when praying for the gathering together of our dispersed ones from all the corners of the earth, really meant to say "Oh God, do nothing of the kind"? That when they said: "Return to Jerusalem, rebuild Zion," they meant something quite different, something which might have been allegorised by any other expression just as well, and better, than by the trumpet sounds of Zion and Jerusalem? Do you believe that our fathers and mothers, when, on the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple, they sat themselves down on the ground wailing and mourning, and chanting the lamentations of Jeremiah, and those marvellous dirges that bemoan the loss of so many holy treasures, and foremost among them the loss of our national independence, did not mean at all what they said, but

that they were merely weeping over the non-realisation of a metaphysical conception? That the stream of tears that kept wet the stones of the western wall of the Temple century after century were shed over the non-realisation of a philosophical abstraction? No, these tears were wept at the loss of our independent national existence; it was the ever-living National Idea that pressed forth these wails and lamentations.

As to the bond of our ancient religion! It has been said by some that Zionism is opposed to the precepts of our religion, and a small number of Rabbis recently issued a declaration to that effect. I suppose when Ezra led the Jews back to Palestine by permission of King Cyrus, if these Rabbis had lived at that time they would have issued their declaration against Ezra and his doings. Ezra repatriated numbers of Jews, and created for them an autonomous government under the suzerainty of Cyrus. It is remarkable that the text of the firman issued by King Cyrus to that effect is recorded in the book of Ezra, and again summarised in the very last verse of the twenty-four books that constitute our Hebrew Bible. "Thus saith Cyrus, King of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of Heaven given me, and he charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whosoever is among you of all his people, the Lord his God is with him, and let him go up." Now Ezra was a thoroughly pious man, and if this action of his might perhaps not have received the sanction of those protesting Rabbis, I for one

should have been quite satisfied with Ezra's amount of loyalty to the Jewish religion.

In reality, our religion and our nationalism are inseparable, are a coherent unity; one is the outflow of the other, and they affect each other reciprocally. It has been said that this is without analogy in any other creed or nation. This is true, and it is one of those features that give Judaism its distinctive character, and its right of existence. It is in perfect harmony with the prophetic visions of universality of worship and brotherhood of all men, which ever have suffused every fibre of Judaism not less than any of its other hopes and aims. Israel can only fulfil its mission if it keeps intact in all its fulness the many inspiriting elements of which it consists. Then only, if the vigour of light and heat is kept up within, will its irradiating and fertilising power work on in undiminished glory. It is impossible to rob Israel of any of its inspiriting influences, and no one will ever succeed in amputating from its body such a spiritualising member as its nationalism. If Judaism is placed on earth by God to accomplish a distinct purpose, it can do so only by keeping intact the machinery destined to effect the result. We may direct and utilise, but can never violate natural forces of which Judaism is one. To try to construct a Judaism without its nationalism, amounts to an attempt to create a Frankenstein's monster. A Judaism without its nationalism can at most bloom in a hot-house; it will keep up for a time an artificial existence, but it is unable to live and propagate in the open.

The strange idea that Jewish nationalism interferes with the loyalty due to the country in which we live is hardly worth refuting. There again, the question is not "*Can* a Jew be a patriot?" but "*Is* the Jew a patriot?" and we need only open our eyes to see how true and faithful a patriot a Jew makes, and no Jew more so than a nationalist Jew. Those who do not believe in the possibility of belonging to two nations and being faithful to both, neither have an eye for incidents in everyday life in all countries and in all conditions of men, from Little Lord Fauntleroy to the Duke of Edinburgh upwards, nor have they any understanding of the comprehensiveness of the human heart and the amount of love it is able to bear; of the undivided and equally strong love of a child for both its parents, and the tenderness of a mother for all her children. It is a pessimistic view of the extent of human feeling, and is refuted by thousands of instances in human life.

Not less pessimistic is the view that nationalism is a retrograde movement, that it advocates separation instead of union, that it opposes the idea of a closer connection of the whole of mankind into a bond of brotherhood, and that it runs counter to the hopes of universality of religious worship. Do not forget, fellow Zionists, that the most sublime conceptions are either used or abused. These very hopes of universality of religious worship have been at the bottom of every religious persecution that ever was perpetrated. The vista of the whole world acknowledging the God of Israel, God in his absolute



unity, is a future foreshadowed by the prophets of Israel. Even this expression, "The God of Israel," has been used and abused. It has been interpreted to mean what it was never intended to convey. As I said before, if the universality of the worship of the one and only God is one of the objects of Israel's existence, it can only be accomplished by Israel complete and unimpaired. The realisation of this ideal will constitute the brotherhood of all nations ;—the brotherhood of all nations, not the effacement of all nations. Brotherhood is the union of heterogeneous elements, the peace between opposites, the acquiescing recognition of differences, the harmony between a variety of elements. There is only one absolute unity, which is God. Variety is not less a divine institution than harmony. It is a fundamental error to confuse the notions of harmony with those of identity. Variety is the high law of nature ; identity would be an emblem of death, variety is an emblem of life. Even the lowest form of life teems with variety, and it is the harmony subsisting between the dazzling infinity of varieties that holds the universe together. Should variety pervade the whole universe, and make possible one of the loftiest of all divine creations—harmony—and should only man be deprived of it? Should the human race be destined—of all creations—to sink down into rigid identity, into monotonous uniformity, without diversity and therefore without union, without variety and therefore without harmony? It is a conception that revolts against human nature, against all

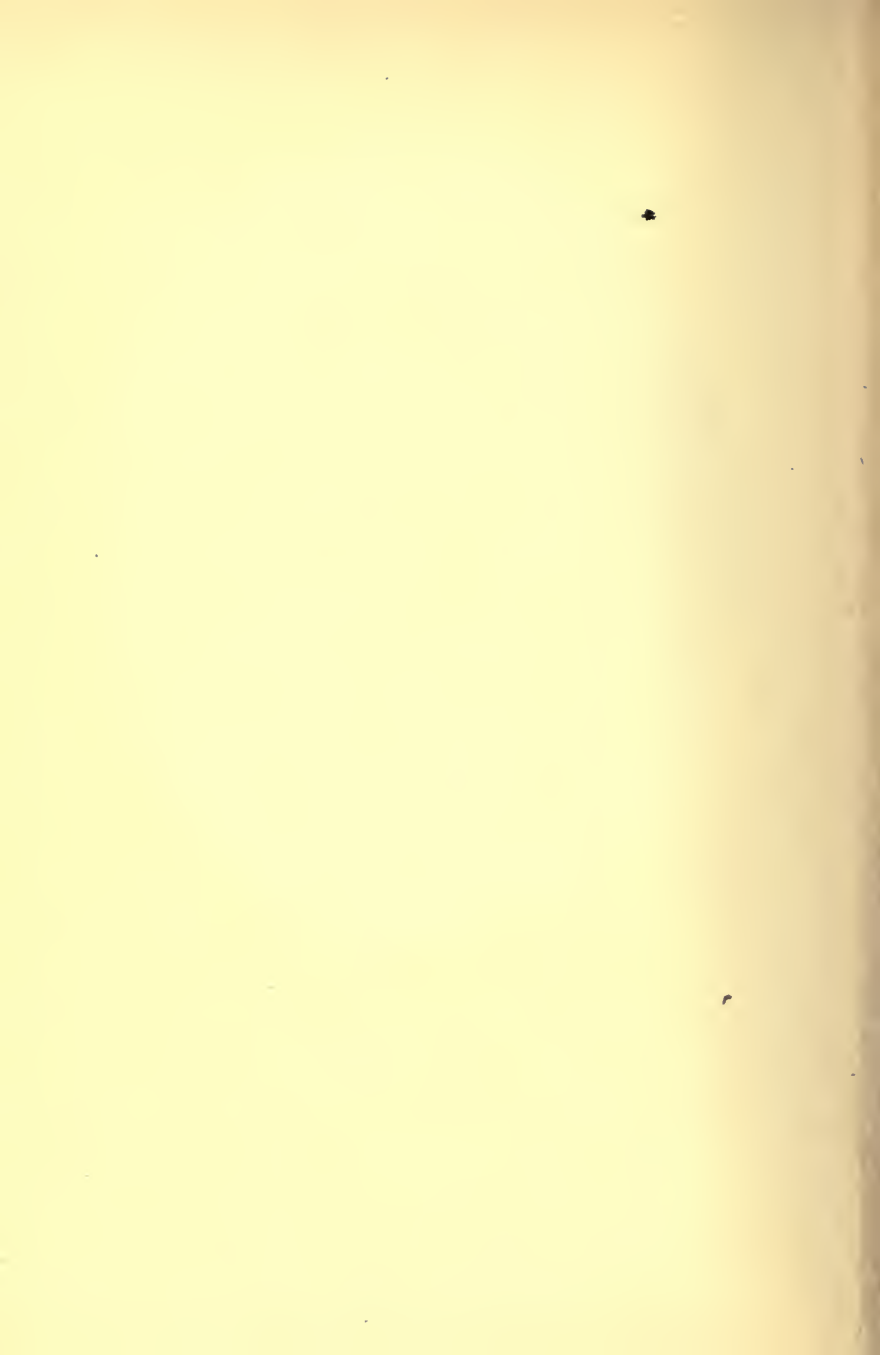
nature. Absence of harmony between man and man is the abuse of variety; brotherhood between man and man is the beneficent use of which it is capable. As well denounce family life and domestic love as nationalism with all its elevating impulses. Why look forward only to the abuses of that form of harmony between man and man which constitutes nationalism, and which is again capable of the still wider harmony between nation and nation? Why ignore the elevating blessings it carries in its train? But perhaps you are only asked to repudiate Jewish nationalism; for the rest you may be Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, Russians, Roumanians, Siamese, Patagonians, or whatever the nationality of those you happen to live among. If you be Jewish nationalists you are repudiating a lofty idea, but if you be exclusively English, or French, or German nationalist, you are doing your duty; your crime has been turned into a virtue.

Fellow Zionists! We hear so much of advancing with the times. It is those Jews who fail to do so, who still cling to certain visions which the last *fin de siècle* opened up. Those wild dreams have proved a failure, and many Jews who had been led away now perceive what a misguided optimism was worth. They have learnt that the abrogation of our characteristic distinctiveness amounted to a violation of nature. They see their error; they return to the truth. They turn to Zionism, to our Jewish nationalism, which has to be asserted as of old. In fact it has never been seriously abrogated. We

know we are the oldest of existing nations; we are also the youngest nation; we are a nation in its infancy. We shall endure, and the duration of our life does not count by centuries merely. We shall be true to ourselves; we shall not shirk the responsibilities that are cast upon us, and assertion of our national existence will bring out the highest ideals which we were placed on earth to realise.



*W. H. Allen*



## JEWISH PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION AND SAMSON RAPHAEL HIRSCH

(1890)

THE present article does not profess to be a biographical sketch of S. R. Hirsch. I do not think that the time has arrived when such a biography could or should be written. Great as the influence was which he wielded during his lifetime, the real fruits of his activity are only just beginning to ripen. Before an account of his life can be of lasting advantage, his name must have first become more the common property of the Jewish nation at large. Personal animosities, which, although almost entirely silenced, may nevertheless still be lurking here and there, must completely vanish. His works must first become known to a greater circle of readers by translations from the German, partly into Hebrew, and partly into the vernacular tongues of countries outside Germany. Moreover, a sketch of the life of S. R. Hirsch would either by far exceed the space which can possibly be assigned to an article in a Review,<sup>1</sup> or it would have to be contracted so as to degenerate into a dry catalogue of accomplishments which were possessed by him, without the possibility of properly illustrating even one of them. All I

<sup>1</sup> *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, in which the above article first appeared.



propose to do is to try to turn the attention of the English Jewish public to a man who is little known to them, whose influence is nevertheless not without effect upon some of them, though they may be unconscious of it; to set in its proper light only one of the many great achievements of this man; namely, his mode of procedure in evolving the ideas of which Judaism is the representative, and to try to recognise the real position he occupies among the philosophers of Jewish religion. All this is only a small but not an unimportant point in his long life, so full of profound thought, of indefatigable activity; but I think it best not to attempt any more for the present. Some readers, on perusing the following pages, will perhaps suspect me of suffering from that disease which Macaulay wittily calls *lues Boswelliana*, "the disease of admiration to which all biographers, translators, editors, all, in short, who employ themselves in illustrating the lives or the writings of others, are peculiarly exposed." It is a suspicion which I am particularly anxious to rouse. For only by means of such wondering doubt as to who that man may be who is able to awaken such admiration as a hero of thought and action, can I hope to reap the gratification of inducing some of my readers to investigate his works and deeds for themselves. About the results of such an investigation I am unconcerned. Perhaps it is also necessary to mention that I am in no way related to the deceased Rabbi who is the subject of this article. The identity of surname is a mere coincidence.

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There is no period in Jewish history in which Jews have not been influenced by external events and circumstances. No man ever fails to be so affected ; it is in his nature, it is one of the elements which constitute man. Jews were not, in reference to their human instincts, placed by the Creator either above or below humanity. Whether considered as forming a religion or a race, or both, they are equally with others a factor in the aggregate of beings of which mankind consists. It might therefore be considered as a truth so evident that it were superfluous to mention it, that Jews are, and were at all ages, children of their time. How comes it then that this saying nevertheless conveys no truism, that it expresses a fact, the enunciation of which is not mere commonplace, but a truth of which it is necessary that we should now and then be reminded, which has been and may be again disputed ?

The reason is this. Whatever theorists may advance to the contrary, it is indisputable that the Jews form a factor, a well-defined, well-distinguishable element in the vast multitude of separate groups of which mankind is composed. Ignore it or avow it, rejoice at it or regret it, the fact is not subject to the views, to the wishes, of this or that philosopher or moralist. Jews have collectively characteristics of their own ; they possess them and adhere to them, or rather, they are possessed and held fast by them in spite of the innumerable vicissitudes in their history, in spite of the strongest influences from without, tending to destroy and utterly efface everything which might

stamp the mark of individuality on the children of Jacob. Heaven and earth have combined to amalgamate them with the rest of humanity, to cause them to be as completely lost among the nations of the earth as the Phœnicians and Trojans of old; but neither different climate nor different soil has proved uncongenial to the vitality of that distinctiveness. Crime of the deepest dye, virtuous aspirations in point of intention of the highest order, have combined, have acted separately, to annihilate it, by brute force, by gentle persuasions, by contemptuous degradation, by enticing allurements. But neither could wholesale massacre turn, nor the most degrading laws shame, nor the most flattering prospects decoy the Jews out of their peculiarities.

But are, then, the Jews an order of beings by themselves? Is the construction of their bodies, the constitution of their intellects; are their moral perceptions, their susceptibilities for pain and pleasure, different from those of the rest of mankind? Certainly not. The Jews are neither more nor less than human. They are, however, one of the many groups which, though in the aggregate making up the sum of mankind, yet are totally different from one another. But those distinguishing marks are of different strength, of greater or smaller tenacity in the various groups. Many of the latter are so seriously influenced by external events as not to be able to sustain their individuality; they amalgamate with the groups with which they come in contact. The Jews, on the contrary, are so essentially

impregnated with that which gives them their individuality, that no influences, however strong, have hitherto been able to obliterate and finally extinguish their special characteristics. Under such circumstances it is certainly worth noticing that even they must obey the general human law of being acted upon by the modifying influences of time and circumstances. It is certainly worth while to inquire in how far the changes thus wrought are mechanical, in how far they are chemical; and where the boundary lies beyond which no motors from without are able to penetrate. For while it is true that powerful agencies have been constantly at work to deprive them of their peculiarities, these efforts from without are as nothing when compared with the tendencies destructive to that individuality which were unintermittently at work within the body of Judaism. Susceptible of every change which is going on around them, keenly alive to their solitary position whenever it proves a source of degradation or oppression; sensitive to every sneer and gibe so lavishly bestowed on whatever is rightly or wrongly considered by others to be peculiar to them; highly impressible, whenever it is permitted them, by the revolutions which take place in the religious, social, and political conditions of the people among whom they dwell; there were always men in their midst who thought it to be their duty not only themselves to cast off everything which reminded others of that exclusive and solitary position, but also to induce their brethren to join them in such efforts. They actually

believed in the possibility of such a consummation. They saw in that which singles out the Jews only some outer garb, of which it was obligatory and perfectly easy to divest themselves at will, partially or entirely.

More than that. The Jews, whenever allowed to do so, have always taken a lively part in the progress of knowledge; they never were behind their time in mental and intellectual movements. Nor have the checks put upon them with the purpose of excluding them from such participation always proved efficacious. Then that universal propensity of imitation has always been especially prominent in them; the desire to be like others has been the cause of many of their excellencies, of many of their foibles. But, however successful such incentives from within were with some individuals, or with some communities, in certain localities and at certain times it was they who gave themselves up to these levelling influences that were the losers. Judaism was lost to them. They were lost among the nations, and their place knows them no more: Judaism in its permanent existence was not affected.

But there were other and greater men than those alluded to, who wanted to bring about a union of that which appeared conflicting between Judaism and the high and noble aspirations of other nations. Their ambition was to be and to remain Jews, and at the same time to enjoy all those intellectual privileges which were the pride and the glory of the great men around them. A noble ambition indeed! The Jews had been struck



by the great efforts of the Greek philosophers in the scrutiny of self, God, and nature. They learnt to recognise all that was divinely beautiful in the Greek forms of expressing thought, both in prose and poetry. The Arab literature with its modifications of Greek philosophy, with its original forms of poetry and style, dazzled their eyes. Was it not a noble aspiration to reconcile these elements with Jewish lore and Jewish practices? To reconcile. Did they then conflict, and if so, was a reconciliation possible? They never stopped to inquire. Conflict certainly there was. Foreign elements were sought to be identified with Jewish ideas and customs. Conceptions and views as divergent as possible had to be declared identical. Only one of three things was possible. The results of extraneous knowledge being recognised as indisputable, the Jewish elements had to yield and make room for the introduction of those intruders who henceforth were to have the predominance or the sole mastery of the field, or a *modus vivendi* had to be found between the two. The foreign elements being assumed to be unassailable, but the Jewish principles and laws equally so, a bridge had to be constructed to span the gap between the two opposite fields of cognition, both had to be brought to one level. Of course neither of the two came off scot-free. On either side many a picturesque hill had to be levelled down to the ground. Many a ravine so useful in saving the country from inundations had to be stopped up. But what will not consummate engineering skill accom-



plish? Why should not Jews have something to show in the way of philosophy of religion? Were Saadiah, Gabirol, Maimonides less earnest in their adherence to their religion than Scotus Erigena, Thomas Aquinas, Albertus Magnus to theirs? Or were the former less acquainted with the philosophical doctrines of their time; were they of smaller intellectual capacity than the latter? Certainly not. The truth is, the mode of philosophising reached these two groups, independently, by the same law of nature. It never occurred to them to doubt its validity. The one group as well as the other, and many more of the same aspirations and tendencies, proceeded spontaneously, and without knowing of each other, on very similar paths. Both the one and the other group possessed a knowledge of Aristotle at second or third hand. His doctrines were acknowledged by them, but had to be moulded and remoulded so as to harmonise with, or, at least, so as not to be in direct opposition to their religious professions. But neither cared to follow up their positions to their last consequences. And when we turn to that Jewish philosopher, whose philosophical work was really of influence, was read and highly valued by the greatest men in Israel, can he be said to have bridged over the gulf in a satisfactory manner? Are the rational explanations which he gives of many of the precepts of the Mosaic law of such a nature as to satisfy the doubting mind? Would a waverer in the field of religion, hesitating whether to fulfil the enactments as laid down in Maimonides' *Yad*

Hachazaka, or to abandon the practice of these precepts as irrational—would he be converted into an ardent observer of these laws merely by taking into consideration the arguments preferred in the philosophical work of the same author? Does not the gap, which Maimonides would fain have filled up between Judaism and that which at his time was called philosophy, yawn between the *Yad Hachazaka* and the *More Nebuchim* of the same man?

This is what many people of his and of succeeding centuries have seen. The third possibility alluded to became a reality in these men. They were not prepared to surrender the faith and the practices of their fathers for doctrines that came to them in foreign garb from without. Nor were they satisfied to balance themselves on the rope which was thought to connect the two opposite banks. They therefore rejected every guidance from philosophy and lived only in their religion. It has become a custom to divide the adherents and opponents of Maimonides into two parties, and to call his followers the lovers of light and knowledge, and his antagonists the lovers of darkness and the haters of science. It will take some time, some centuries perhaps, before such irrational cant will disappear from the books of history; before either of these parties will have its own place allotted it in the mental and religious revolutions of mankind. When Kant, in conscious opposition to all philosophers who preceded him, denies that pure reason will ever be able to demonstrate the existence of God and the immortality

of the soul, and nevertheless maintains this God and that immortality, and asserts that the belief in them is demanded by practical reason ;—when he investigates one by one the philosophical proofs of these doctrines as given by his predecessors only to reject them, and yet is driven to assume their propositions by his moral consciousness ; it will certainly not enter the mind of any sensible being to accuse Kant of being a lover of darkness, an opponent of the free use of the mental capacities of man. How many men are there, even in our days—if any there be—who will subscribe to Maimonides' philosophical doctrines ; who will adopt as their own, who will call really rational, most of the explanations he gives of the various Jewish laws ? And why then load with reproaches the men who saw the insufficiency of Maimonides' method, and in the choice between the elements from without and that which was offered them, the Jews, by their own Judaism, declared for the latter ? They did not trouble themselves to find a mode of conciliation ; some of them from incapacity, some from unwillingness, and some from a consciousness of the impossibility of arriving at any satisfactory result.

In a similar manner it has become a custom with a certain section of Jewish scholars to speak in terms of condemnation, and in terms of condemnation only, of the mystical element which played so important a part in the history of the Jewish religion. Let us assume, for the sake of argument, such

Mysticism to be foreign to the doctrines and objects of Judaism. Let us grant that all and every single proposition averred by the Cabbala rests on error. Let us admit that all these profound mystical speculations rooted in Neo-Platonism, and in some other more ancient systems, were imported from without and adapted to the Jewish beliefs and customs. Let it be even so. Are, therefore, the Jews to be blamed for having done that which all thinking men of Europe have done at certain times? Why should not the Jews be also, in respect to Mysticism, the children of their time? There is certainly nothing disparaging to the Jews in the fact that they were in some respects the forerunners of a time in which Mysticism was one of the powerful weapons by which the authority of the schools was effectually undermined, and the way paved for modern philosophy. For Mysticism is one of the human instincts. It prompts men to seek a profounder knowledge of, a closer communion with, things supernatural, with the Deity. Neither the teachings of Aristotle nor the higher ideas of Neo-Platonism could satisfy that craving. The supposed Areopagite Dionysius, Scotus Erigena, Master Eckhart, Nicholas Cusanus, Pico of Mirandula, Paracelsus, Giordano Bruno, Jacob Böhme, and many, many more, are treated with the greatest respect by the historiographers of philosophy. A proper place is assigned to each of these men, and to the followers and schools connected with their names. Their teachings are expounded, their greater or lesser import-

ance in the development of intellectual knowledge carefully weighed. Several of these men had taken essential parts of their systems from the Jewish Cabbala. Why then should not the Cabbalists be treated with the same respect, with the same deference, by the Jews? To treat them exclusively in a condemnatory manner, to have nothing to spare for them except sneers and derision, shows little of the true spirit of historical research.

But when we come to consider that which may be called the philosophical portion of this Jewish Mysticism, we meet with propositions of which it may well be doubted whether they reproduce thoughts which are inherent in Judaism, and are consequently evolved out of it, whether they are not rather such ideas as, although in themselves not antagonistic to anything Jewish, are yet the fruits of a cogitation outside Judaism, brought into harmony with its tenets and pronounced objects. But, while in philosophy it depended upon the frame of mind of the philosopher whether philosophy or religion should have the ascendancy in the conflict, in the case of Mysticism it was invariably adopted to make the behests of religion paramount over any opposite conclusions of the Cabbala. Practically it was the same with the philosophers, and almost without exception with Jews and non-Jews, philosophy was the handmaid of religion. Not a jot was sacrificed, even by the greatest advocates of welding together philosophy with religion, of the latter to the former.

The philosophical researches of Jews and non-Jews alike, were neither independent nor progressive. Philosophy was as dogmatic as, if not much more so than, religion itself. The philosophy of Aristotle, as far as it could be known from translations and excerpts, had reached its zenith in Avicbron or Gabirol. To him some Christian philosophers of the Middle Ages turned for information, not knowing that they were consulting a Jewish author. In him they found material for harmonising thought, which meant Aristotelianism as they knew it, with their particular religious persuasions. For the rest Scholasticism gradually withered, all that was fertile and inspiriting in it having been used up long ago. But it took a long time before philosophy came to be that which is in our days dignified by that name. Humanism had first to show to the astonished eye of Europe the real Aristotle, had to disclose the speculations of Plato. The thinkers of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries had to take account of Neo-Platonism. A general wave of Mysticism, which went, in profundity and intenseness of religious craving, much beyond anything the Neo-Platonists could offer, moved the thinking minds of Germany and Italy, and satisfied the spiritual thirst in a much higher degree than was possible for the decrepit, sapless Scholasticism to do.

Pico of Mirandula had taken the Jewish Cabbala within the range of his speculations. Reuchlin discovered for Christian Europe the Hebrew and Rabbinical literature, and added a branch of research and knowledge to those already existing.



Reuchlin stood, in his mode of thought, exactly on the level of his age. In literature he was a Humanist; in philosophy he had a leaning to the Mysticism of his time; but he was distinguished among his contemporaries by the immense extent of his reading, by his overpowering love for his newly discovered Hebrew literature, and by the keenness and purity of his moral perceptions. He eagerly laid hand on all the genuine and supposititious Cabbalistical books he could obtain, and tried to prove Christianity from the Cabbala and the Talmud in the same manner as previous ages had tried to prove it from Aristotle.

The European intellect had then to undergo the friction produced by the struggles for and against the reformation of the Church. The science of nature took a flight never attempted before. The investigation of nature commenced to be based on observation and experiment instead of mere speculation. The modern philosophy was being gradually prepared step by step. The way was paved by a Telesius, a Campanella, and, above all, by Giordano Bruno. The latter showed himself a product of past centuries in his theory of the harmony of contradictories; yet points in his Pantheism to Cusanus, who preceded him, and to Spinoza, by whom he was succeeded, and in the exposition of the nature of his monads, foreshadowed Leibnitz's theory. And thus it took a long time before German, and more particularly English, thought led up to that new era of philosophy which was introduced by Kant, and has not come to a close yet.

The Jews took little or no part in these movements. The

reason is threefold. First, oppression was, especially in Germany, of such a nature as to surpass in cruelty even the sufferings they had to undergo in the Middle Ages. Where the right of their existence was questioned, and the confines in which their enemies kept them apart from the bulk of their fellow-men were most justly blessed by them, because they afforded them shelter against violence, where all the levers and resources of the law were put in motion to keep them in a state of degradation, it cannot be wondered at that they remained excluded from the general march of science; that they were unacquainted with the revolutions in the development of knowledge, which—it must not be forgotten—was not among their Christian neighbours the common property of the everyday labourer, tradesman, merchant, but only of the learned few. The second reason was the nature of the religion for which the Jews suffered, and which alone preserved them from extinction. The laws which they observed kept them in breath from the beginning of the year till the end. Every day, every action of life brought its duties. What with others was a mere gratification of bodily desires, was with them the fulfilment of God's will. And thus the satisfaction of having, to the best of their intentions, lived up to their duties richly compensated them for the absence of the comforts and privileges of others; kept their envy down, appeased their many spiritual instincts, made them contented, and armed them with patience and endurance. And thirdly, as for their rational, moral, and purely religious propensities, who

can say that, with their Bible, their Talmud, and Midrashim, their More Nebuchim and Choboth Halebaboth, their Cabbala and Mussar Sforim, their Maasse books, and Tseeno Ureeno, their spiritual instincts were dead, their moral perceptions blunt, their intellectual capacities unoccupied, their longing to commune with God ungratified? There was plenty of material for thought and feeling, which they fostered and cultivated, and explored, and discussed, and which made their forcibly isolated position tolerable, and which kept fresh in their souls everything which is noble and sublime in the nature of man.

But things took another turn. Revolutions took place in the intellectual, the social, the political aspects of Europe, in the world of action and the world of thought. The conditions and the ideas of the Jews affected each other reciprocally. The cry for liberty and equality which resounded in every nook and corner, and which, when artificially stifled, broke forth all the more vigorously, penetrated also the abodes and the hearts of the Jews. They ardently longed to take part in the general movement, and to adapt the aspirations of society at large to their faith. The movement among the non-Jews to attain the summit of liberty and of equality could not but overthrow partly or wholly the boundaries which separated the Jews from all participation in the intellectual and political stir of the age. It seemed as if an era were commencing for the Jews, instigated both from within and from without, such as had never existed since the Exile. But that which happened to society at large

happened also to the Jews. In the struggle for liberty and equality there were undoubtedly those who not only understood these words in their noblest conception, but also perceived the limits of their feasibility. These were no doubt the best and, at the same time, the most useful benefactors of their age, but their number was small. From these downwards representatives of every shade, every gradation in the conception of these two sublime ideas existed; even to such, and they were the majority, who grasped at these names with enthusiasm and ardour, but without the slightest reflection. They never thought of the confines within which only, liberty and equality can be exercised. The very suggestion that such limits existed appeared to them contradictory to the ideas themselves. Liberty unlimited, unbounded, not listening to reason, not tied to any guiding principle; a liberty pure and simple, as they thought, in politics, in religion, in literature, in social life, in family relations; equality in which the good would balance the wicked, the ounce would balance the pound—a liberty and equality than which no greater slavery can be imagined, subversive of every free thought, of every wholesome principle, of obedience to the laws of nature, to the laws of the human heart. A liberty and equality which could not but end in the most unscrupulous oppression, in the direst confusion. “The words liberty and equality,” Schiller says, “resound, and bands of assassins roam about. Women become hyenas, and make terror their sport.” A strange coincidence!

Of this terrible drama of the macrocosmos of European and American society, we find a faint reflection in the microcosmos of Jewish life. The new departure, which is most conveniently connected with the name of Mendelssohn, showed in its development every shade and gradation of the adaptation of the general ideas, the general revolutions, the general hue and cry, to their own narrow sphere. Every single grade between the two extremes, from the noblest workers in the cause of general enlightenment of their brethren to the lowest instincts of fanaticism, ostensibly for the same purpose, came to the front. All degrees, from the strictest adherence to the written and oral traditions to the most undisguised repudiation of anything and everything which reminded of Judaism, were represented. In nature as in history, it is difficult to fix strict lines of demarcation. It is doubtful whether the last step on this ladder of opinions must be said to be occupied by those so-called enlightened Jews, merchants in a large way of business, scholars in expectation of actual possession of emolument and honour, who openly abjured Judaism and turned Christians; or whether we have to think in this respect of those who just stopped short of this last proceeding. The vocabulary employed by the advocates of the new direction against such as insisted upon the maintenance of traditions in theory and practice, was not new. It had been long in use by Christians in discussing differences which had a resemblance to the points at issue between Jews and Jews, and it was



indiscriminately adopted by the defenders of modern Judaism. Fanaticism, intolerance, self-deception, deception of others, obscurantism, hatred of knowledge, pious frauds, impious frauds, inconsistency, hypocrisy, and scores more of such flatteries were lavishly bestowed upon the adherents of traditional Judaism. This is not the place to inquire whether the accusations were well founded, nor to ask whether the defenders of the new direction themselves did not deserve these charges. The history of the most recent reform movements among the Jews has not been and cannot be written yet. The time may be long in coming, but the time will come when it will be seen against which side some, if not all, of these charges are most justly made.

However, the Jews had taken up with zeal the opportunities offered them. They threw themselves eagerly into the general contest for fame, for wealth, for distinction, for intellectual superiority. There were certainly some among them who pursued the new paths without remembering for a moment any links that might attach them to their ancient race, any connection with the religious observances of their fathers. But these formed a minority. That mysterious something which singles out the Jew, and stamps him with its mark, is of too indelible a nature not to make itself known and felt even when all influences combine to efface it. Like Faust, who from a life of study and contemplation in his solitary cell, suddenly thrown into the vortex of worldly enjoyments,



was reminded by the gentle, weak Gretchen, "but how about thy religion," so the Jew was always reminded of the fact that he was a Jew, however deeply he had suffered himself to sink in the abyss of extraneous ideas and tenets. He could not hesitate to adopt all the good and noble results of the different sets of systems which he found being built up around him. He adopted the systems themselves, and now was at pains to reconcile them in some way or other with Judaism. As before, he did not inquire whether there was a conflict, and if so, whether a reconciliation was possible. Bridges were built in every direction. But unlike previous struggles, it was not religion that now held sway. This time a mode of living was only secured by indulgence on the side of religion. The Jews showed themselves again true children of their time. Until now philosophy had been the handmaid of religion with Jew and non-Jew; it had had to accommodate itself to the requirements of religious faith. Where a reconciliation was impossible, the philosophers consciously excluded such obstinate religious doctrines from the number of questions with which philosophy was entitled to deal. This was different with the modern philosophers. The religious dogmas were always made a portion of the philosophy that was propounded; no question was withdrawn [from contemplation]; only in case of conflict it was no longer philosophy that had to yield, but religion. Albertus Magnus or Thomas Aquinas had banished such doctrines as revelation, the trinity, incarnation, resur-

rection, from the regions of philosophical inquiry ; this was not imitated by Kant, by Fichte, by Schelling. They brought within the cycles of philosophical reasoning not only religion, but their religion. They wanted religion to be the result and outcome of reason, and of reason only, and managed to make the dogmas of their particular church appear to flow naturally out of their philosophy, each of them in his own way, out of his own peculiar system.

I cannot stop to trace all the shades and varieties in the forms religion assumed, as considered from the variously formed philosophical, social, and political points of view. The Jews in their own way held pace with the general movement. They formed their opinions, or rather their opinions were formed according to the schemes which prevailed in the circles in which they lived. Their consciousness as Jews demanded recognition, and moulds were easily constructed to which their religious convictions had to adjust themselves, so as not to be out of harmony with convictions acquired from other sources. There is no end to the variety in shapes of such casts. The author of each of them was naturally very proud of his invention. He certainly thought his to be the only serviceable one. He thought himself to be strong-minded, of intellectual independence, free from prejudice, neither influenced by tradition nor by authority. Poor infatuations ! He did not see how much he was the creature of influences from without ; how the strength of his mind lay in his incapacity to resist, how his

intellect, if independent in one direction, was so only because he had been warned off that road by others, and forced into other paths from which he was not even able to cast his glance backwards. He did not see that he was free from one prejudice, perhaps because he was subject to a number of others much more whimsical; that he deemed himself to be above authority, because he was the abject slave of many authorities; that he was uninfluenced by tradition, because the contemporary influences held him in their bondage. I do not allude here to such as have altogether thrown off every connection with their Jewish brethren, but to those Rabbis, preachers, teachers of religion, who for about a century have been the representatives of the so-called "Modern Judaism."

This "Modern Judaism" is very, very old. It is as old as Judaism itself. From the very first appearance of Judaism it showed itself; it seems as if it is naturally inherent in it. Whatever form it may assume, it always shows the same primary motors; impatience of any authority from within, attachment to everything from without. These elements are constant, whilst the forms in which they find their expression vary with the conditions of the age. If these conditions show many varieties of colour, we shall find most, if not all of them, reflected in the "Modern Judaism" of the time. Whether the variable elements in each case are good, bad, or indifferent; whether they are commendable or reprehensible; whether they are rational or irrational, is not at the choice of the "Modern

Jew." Wherever the spirit of the influences that surround him direct he has to follow. The attraction from without is so strong, the attachment to his religious tenets so weak; this strength, this weakness is at the bottom of the "Modern Judaism" of all ages; and always that which is "Modern" in it varies directly, and that which is "Jewish" in it varies inversely, as the extraneous influences. It is "Modern Judaism" which goes like a red thread through the whole history of the Jews, from the time of Moses down to our own time. The books of the Bible abound in examples; the post-biblical history of the Jews is rich in illustrations.

But if "Modern Judaism" is old in point of time, it is also old in another sense of the word. "Modern Judaism," as it appears in its various phases, is in our time antiquated, it is an anachronism, a relic of discarded scientific procedures, a lagging behind the progress and development of knowledge of modern times. For the characteristic of modern science, that which so visibly and perceptibly marks it off from previous centuries, is this; that it does not try to construe *a priori* that which can be grasped by the senses; that it does not build up from some preconceived notions arbitrarily posited truths about things which can be brought within the scope of observation. Instead of starting from a certain general principle under which everything had *nolens volens* to be forced, modern science, when considering things visible, palpable, perceptible, starts from observation and experiment, and is not satisfied till the sub-

sequent generalisations have as far as possible been verified. The proper use of induction and deduction, the utilising of either of them exactly where it is suitable, the judicial combination of both methods where it is necessary that they should offer each other their hand—this it is which gave such immense impetus to the human mind, which altered beyond recognition the aspect of the civilised world.

This being so, it would be strange indeed if this modern procedure would have remained without reflection on the Jewish mind. The so-called "Modern Judaism" failed, and fails to this day to participate in this progress of the time, to utilise the improved method of reasoning. It continues its attempts to construe *a priori* that which is above all a subject of observation; to ignore phenomena if they contradict the preconceived notions from which it tries to construe a Judaism as it should be. Whatever set of ideas the spokesman of the modern departure may have been wedded to, forms to him the mould into which he casts not only his religion in a general sense, but his Judaism, and not only his own Judaism, but the Judaism which he would fain force upon others. He argues, that if Judaism is the true religion it must be above all—this, that, or the other—and then he takes Judaism, like another Procrustes, and squeezes, and amputates, and stretches, till he thinks it tolerably fits, and does not more than fit, his own particular frame. If, as is sometimes the case, the author of such a scheme is at various times differently impressed, he gets



sometimes dissatisfied with the frame first chosen by him. He remodels and reconstructs it, and goes on squeezing and lopping poor Judaism, till it loses gradually every characteristic mark. Dietary laws, Hebrew language, initiation, are one by one discarded. The sanctity of the Sabbath sinks into some meaningless ceremony in the synagogue, which, however, does not take place on the seventh day, but on the first day of the week. And such process is then dignified with the sonorous name of "developing." It is the kind of development which took place in the minds of Goneril and Regan, the daughters of King Lear. When the latter resigned and surrendered everything to his two daughters, he had reserved for himself a retinue of a hundred knights. But the daughters, when mistresses of the situation, began to reflect on the expediency of his having a hundred followers. They thought them to be too many by half. Regan says :—

"You will return and sojourn with my sister,  
Dismissing half your train."

But whilst thinking further about it she is clearly developing.

"If you will come to me, I entreat you  
To bring but five-and-twenty, to no more  
Will I give place and notice."

But however fast she is developing, she cannot keep pace with her sister, for Goneril remarks :

"Hear me, my lord,  
What need of five-and-twenty, ten, or five."



Regan, however, is not to be outdone in the art of developing.

“What need one?”

she says, and poor Lear is driven out in storm and cold without a single attendant.

It is the merit of Samson Raphael Hirsch to have applied to Judaism the improved methods of reasoning, which modern times impose on every one who undertakes the contemplation of subjects which are within the scope of observation. He did so consciously, deliberately, and consistently. He never swerved from his object. He brought into its service the logical acuteness of a truly philosophical intellect, the glowing enthusiasm of loving devotion, the penetrating keenness of minute observation of details, the vast comprehensibility of mind, which darts with true aim at that which is general in the enormous mass of special phenomena. He brought into its service a knowledge of his times, a knowledge of human nature, a steadiness of purpose, a power of application, a capacity for organisation and administration, such as are rarely found singly, as are most rarely found combined in one person. He possessed oratorical powers of the highest order, he possessed the most amiable and gentle virtues, the most unbending and stern virtues. He was one of the few imperial spirits, to use Macaulay's words, whose rare prerogative it is to give to the human mind a direction which

it shall retain for ages; in this case certainly to the human mind within the narrower circle of Judaism.

Samson Raphael Hirsch was born at Hamburg on the 20th of June, 1808. His parents, to whom, as "the guardians of his childhood, the guides of his youth, the friends of his manhood," he dedicated his work *Horeb*, could not possibly foresee what fruits would be produced from the germs of mental greatness hidden in the child. They destined him for a mercantile career, and educated him accordingly. His instruction in Hebrew was not neglected; his mind eagerly absorbed the teachings administered to him, and the explanation of some text in Holy Writ given him by his learned great-uncle never faded from his memory.<sup>1</sup> Such training, and above all the teaching he received from Chacham Bernays, fell on fruitful soil. It is true he entered on his commercial pursuits, but he soon left them to become a Rabbi. "You know," he says in his *Nineteen Letters*, under the *nom de plume* of Naphtali, "how from my earliest childhood these subjects (of religion and Judaism) engaged my mind. Educated by enlightened, religious parents, the words of Holy Writ attracted me at an early time. My understanding having become more mature, it was from my own choice that Holy Writ led me to the study of the Talmud. No influence from without, only my own determination prompted from within made me choose the position of Rabbi." He entered the University of Bonn as a student.

<sup>1</sup> R. L. Frankfurter, the author of *קול יהודה והרכסים לבקעה* and *קול יהודה*. See *Jeshurun*, 1868, p. 133.

There he lived on terms of intimacy with Abraham Geiger, a man who was in future days to represent opinions diametrically opposed to those of Hirsch. Geiger wrote about this time: "Samson Raphael Hirsch is one of my friends. He exercised great influence upon me, and gladdened my life at Bonn. One evening, when we walked home together after the lecture, we conversed about Goethe's *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, which I was reading at the time. We told each other our circumstances, we regretted the isolation of Jewish theologians, and agreed to found a debating society. This brought me in close intimacy with Hirsch. . . . Hirsch made the first speech, to which I replied on the following Thursday. We had a long debate, in which I recognised and learned to admire his extraordinary eloquence, his acuteness, his clear and quick comprehension. . . . I respected his excellent talents, his strict virtue, and I loved the kindness of his heart."<sup>1</sup>

Hirsch was hardly twenty-two years of age when he became Rabbi of Oldenburg. At the age of twenty-eight he published his first pamphlet, *Nineteen Letters on Judaism*;<sup>2</sup> and in this very first attempt he took up a standpoint from which he had, during his long life, never occasion to recede. He commences with delineating the objections raised at that time against traditional Judaism, putting them in the mouth of a friend in the following manner:—

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<sup>1</sup> *Nachgelassene Schriften*, v. p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Neunzehn Briefe über Judenthum* . . . herausgegeben von Ben Uriel (i.e. S. R. Hirsch) [since translated into English by B. Drachman, 1899].

The object of all religion should be to bring man nearer to his destination. The latter can only consist in bliss and perfection. What bliss is offered by Judaism to its adherents? Slavery, misery, contempt is their lot. The law severs them from everything which adorns and beautifies life. All enjoyments are interdicted. And as to civilisation and culture; what greatness has been achieved by Judaism as compared with Egyptians, Phenicians, Greeks, Romans, Italians, French, English, Germans? Having nothing left of that which constitutes a people, they yet call themselves a nation. And the law itself! It enjoins isolation, which creates suspicion and distrust; it degrades the mind, so that the Jew bears contempt with equanimity; it is opposed to the cultivation of arts; its tenets obstruct the way to free speculation. Its study distorts the mind, encourages subtleties and scrutiny of paltry topics; it disqualifies it for any straight thought. How can any one who is able to enjoy the beauties of a Virgil, a Tasso, a Shakespeare, who can follow the logical conclusions of a Leibnitz and Kant—how can such a one find pleasure in the Old Testament, so deficient in form and taste, and in the senseless writings of the Talmud?

And what effect has Judaism on the heart and on life? The heart shrinks to a timid scrupulousness about unmeaning trifles. It is only taught to fear God. Every affair of life, to the most trivial one, is brought in connection with God. Life itself is an uninterrupted asceticism, a service of praying and ceremonials. That Jew is honoured most who retires from the world which he does not know and which sustains him, to waste his life in fasting and praying and the reading of senseless books.

And in our time, forsooth! How is it possible to execute all these precepts while travelling, in social intercourse, in business? And the Reform movement of the time, which cuts away everything that does not accord with the idea of man's destination and the demands of the age, procures no remedy; for it is nothing but stepping outside Judaism. Why not follow up these ideas independently and consistently to their

last consequences, rather than lean in such a way against opposing forces, which cannot become after all anything but arbitrary patchwork? Moreover, there is no unity, no magistracy, no authority. Every one acts separately. The most divergent opinions obtain among Rabbis and preachers; from the most enlightened destructiveness to the most dogged persistency in sticking to the old edifice to be buried under its ruins.

Surely there is no shirking here, no connivance. The charge against traditional Judaism is not palliated. We see at once that the author is not the man to overlook difficulties, or to mince them; nor will he be satisfied with trying to bind up the wound in one or two places, and to make believe that thereby the illness of the whole body is stamped out.

The *Nineteen Letters* proceed to meet the said charges which in the course of the exposition are further illustrated. The method Hirsch applies has been sketched by me in the introductory remarks. It is this which stamps him as a true son of his age in the noblest sense of the word: to understand thoroughly the new tools and instruments of reasoning that have been brought to a high degree of perfection, to wield them with a master-hand, and to apply them, and them only, to the scrutiny of the highest truths is certainly progress. The keystone to his whole system, to realise which his whole life was engaged, will be found in a few words modestly put as a note under the text.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Nineteen Letters on Judaism*, page 96.

Two revelations are given us, Nature and the Torah. For the investigation of either only one method exists. In nature the phenomena are facts; and we are intent to spy out *a posteriori* the law of every one and the connection of all. The proof of the truth, or rather, of the probability of our assumptions is again Nature itself, by the phenomena of which we have to test our assumptions, so as to reach the highest degree of certainty ever attainable, namely, to be able to say: Everything actually is as if our assumptions were true; or, in other words: All phenomena brought under our observation can be explained by our assumption. One single opposing phenomenon therefore makes our assumption untenable. It is therefore our duty to gather all experience that can possibly be obtained about the phenomenon which is the subject of our investigation; to examine it in its totality. Whenever and as long as we have not been able yet to discover the law and the connection of any phenomenon, which exists as a fact, the phenomenon itself remains a fact for all that. Exactly the same it is with the investigation of the Torah. The Torah is a fact like Heaven and Earth. The Torah, like Nature, has God for its ultimate cause. A fact can be ignored in neither, even if cause and connection is not discovered. We have to trace in it God's wisdom. For this purpose we have first to assume its many particulars to their whole extent as a phenomenon, and to trace out of them their connection among themselves and with the objects they refer to. Our assumptions have to be verified again by the particulars themselves; and here again the greatest certainty obtainable is this: Everything actually is as if our assumption were true. But as in Nature the phenomenon remains a fact although we have not comprehended it yet as to its cause and connection, and its existence is not dependent on our investigation, but *vice versâ*, thus also the components of the Torah remain the law even if we have not discovered the cause and connection of a single one.

Hirsch commences his reply to the grave objections by doubting whether man's destination is really bliss and per-



fection ; whether Judaism has to be measured by this principle : but this question is for the present left in suspense. True to his method, he asks the reader (his correspondent) to accept Judaism as a historical phenomenon. Its only monument being the Torah, he asks him to read the latter with no other object but to find out what Judaism is. "For we want to know Judaism ; let us therefore ask : What do men become who recognise the contents of this book as the basis and rule of their lives, as revealed to them by God ? Only when Judaism is known from itself, known as it exhibits itself, and then is found to be in itself untenable and objectionable—then only let him who likes reject it." It is impossible to follow in this article the line of reasoning, along which the author of the *Nineteen Letters* comes to the conclusions he draws, for this would mean to reproduce the whole book. I must content myself with quoting such passages as will give the reader an insight into the system which was finished and completed in Hirsch's mind at the very outset of his career. For the way by which he arrives at his inferences, and for the manner in which he finds them expressed in Judaism, I must refer the reader to the book itself.

Let us read, he says, the Torah, unmindful of the trouble which the reading of these writings caused us in our youth, unmindful of all prejudices which may have been instilled in us against them from many sides. Let us read them as if we never had read them. Let us put ourselves the questions : What is to me the world within me and without ; what am I to that world ; what am I as man and Israelite combined, as

איש ישראל ?

The inquiry proceeds step by step. A short description of nature in its beauty and usefulness is given. The Torah tells that God created all this. There is one Creator, everything else is created. This world is God's creation. Everything about us serves. Every force is a messenger of God; all matter is limitation put thereto by God, to act on it, within it, by means of it, according to God's omnipotent law. Everything serves God. What is man in this chorus of Creatures, of Servants of God? It is impossible that man alone, in a world in which everything serves, everything acts, should do nothing except either enjoy (receive), or suffer (want), and should not himself act.

Man, the image of God, *is for everything*; he is to till and to guard, his destination is to work in justice and love. It is not the earth which is for him, he is given to the earth. Everything else acts unconsciously and without will, man works with consciousness and freedom. Our vocation, our destination is not that which comes to us, but that which goes forth from us. Our actions accord with God's will if they are good, if not they are a failure. The greatness of these actions is only measured in proportion to the means vouchsafed us. Man is happy by bliss and perfection, only when these means are applied according to God's will. Man's destiny is attainable by everybody, in every condition of life. If the means given him are applied according to God's will he has attained the

object of man. His whole life in its totality—his thinking, feeling, speaking, acting, also his acquiring and enjoying—was religion. This is above change, this is not affected by the vicissitudes of life.

Man's position in the creation is therefore neither that of a god nor of a slave. He is only a co-operator, but at the same time a first-born brother in respect to the nature and compass of his service. Not that is good or evil which either pleases or displeases God, but that which is either in accordance with or opposed to God's will. Man should freely submit to the law to which all other beings are unwillingly subjected. But he has the power not to submit. The demands of his body engender desires to enjoy, the power of his intellect engenders pride; either of these hinder his submission. When man suffers his animal inclinations to get the mastership to which, as a subservient slave, he subordinates the power of his intellect, he becomes the most dangerous of brutes. The author goes through the history of the first sin, of Cain, the Nephilim, Enos, Noah, by the light of these principles, which, in their turn, have been suggested by the narrative. He considers the flood and its necessity for the education of mankind; the necessity for selecting a people, and why the particular people that was selected, what it was, and what it was destined to become, so as to fulfil God's object. At the very commencement of the history of that people a man was selected to be its patriarch, who realised already in his own life the

ideal of the future people. Loving God, and God alone, he relinquished country, native town, family, parents, and everything which is dear to man, to follow him who called. He received the call to be the father of a nation which would become a blessing to all the nations of the earth, which would preserve the way of God to practise kindness and justice. He followed the call; he realised that love to the only God in his love to his children and his fellow-men. He combined love (אהבה) with (אמונה) firm trust in God and (יראה) fear of God. These qualities were inherited by Isaac and Jacob: in the former the fear of God was the most prominent feature; the latter was above all the bearer of the trust in God. All three equally recognised God's absolute unity.

It is impossible for me to follow Hirsch throughout his investigation. All that can be done here is to quote some sentences, which by their sublimity and purity of tendency are indicative of the mind of their author, and of the nature of the aims he assigns to Judaism. And in quoting from the pamphlet I confine myself to such ideas as are of more general interest, instead of reproducing such as bear more distinctly on the subject in hand. For in doing the latter the statements must necessarily be taken out of their context; it would be impossible to give the arguments on which they are based. They would therefore appear as unsupported statements, as gratuitous, arbitrarily assumed conceptions, and would rather

invite rejection than adoption. The following therefore must suffice :—

Now after all that has been said, what is it that we expect the Torah to be? It is a revelation of the means by which to execute God's will towards everything outside us by everything that is given us. In other words, it is the revelation of how to practise justice and love with everything towards everything. Add to this the idea represented by Israel, not only to realise all this in actual life, but also to preserve and to pronounce the idea which underlies all this for the education of self and others; and also everything which results from Israel's political life, which, of course, has no application outside the country and the state, and you have the contents of all the obligations the Torah lays upon you.—I. תּוֹרָה. The historically revealed ideas about God, the world, humanity, and Israel, with all their consequences. And all this not as dogmas or creeds, but as principles of life to be recognised and adopted by mind and heart.—II. מִשְׁפָּטִים. Judgments. Justice towards equals from the principle of this very equality. Therefore justice to man.—III. חֻקִּים. Behests. Justice towards the lower orders of beings from the principle of their belonging to God, towards earth, plant, animal, and of all three after having become part of our self; consequently, justice towards our possessions, our body, our feeling, and our thinking.—IV. מִצְוֹת. Injunctions of love towards all beings without any claim on their side, purely in obedience to God, and from the idea of our destination as man and Israelite combined.—V. עֲדוּת. Monuments of the truths underlying humanity and Judaism by symbolical representations in words and action for the individual, for Israel, and beyond Israel.—VI. עֲבוֹדָה. Exaltation and consecration of our life within, for the fulfilment of our vocation in the outer life by the purification of our judgment through symbolical action and word. The fundamental ideas are therefore : 1. Justice. To respect every being as God's creature, every property as thus ordained by God, every arrangement as God's law,

and to satisfy all their claims. 2. Love. To adopt every being as a child of God, as a brother; to assist it in arriving at the end set it by God, without any claim of its own, purely in obedience to God.—3. Education. To train self and others to such activity, by being pervaded by the truths as principles of life, by giving them expression for self and others, by recovering them when lost during life.

This sketch of what the Torah offers us, of what it demands of us, the author asks us to assume as a preliminary theory which awaits its verification in the further development of the subject; although the author assures us that every single opinion uttered here is the result of the study for several years of Bible, Talmud, and Midrash. The proof of his hypotheses he promised to give at a future time, and nobly he redeemed his pledge during the fifty-three years which succeeded this first attempt.

Do not expect, he says, to find in me an infallible master. I will honestly show you where I myself am still in doubt and darkness, and I will invite you to independent investigation. For the present do not expect any more than stray thoughts. Of course you cannot but find your Judaism antagonistic to your idea of the destination of man, of bliss and perfection, a destination not recognised by Judaism, against the lower potencies of which, namely, eagerness for pleasure and worship of possession, it rather is diametrically opposed. The nature of these potencies is spiritualised by nobler men, but never altogether discarded. The idea itself is the result of considering the world without God as its motor; of considering God without a world that serves him. Israel knows something else, something more sublime. . . . And has that nation borne no part in erecting the great



edifice of Humanity? I will not ask, when then has one of all the other nations consciously supplied a stone towards it; whether every one of them has not sought merely self even when being building material in God's hand. Nor will I ask, whether everything they produced brought blessing with it. But I will ask, whether it is not true, that Israel has saved out of the shipwreck of the times, saved consciously and with sacrifice of self, that, through which alone, and as a means subordinate to it, science, culture, arts, and inventions will one day become really building materials of bliss for the welfare of the world. Israel in its isolation works for the unison, the brotherhood of all humanity. Almost on every page of our prayer-book we pray for the realisation of that object. All nations work towards that end, nations which existed and disappeared, with their virtues and with their vices. All contribute to the one edifice of humanity. For this, all good men of all nations have lived; the Greek with his art, the Roman with his sword, Israel in its own way. . . . The whole question of emancipation, in as far as it concerns only our external condition, is in Judaism only of secondary interest. The nations will soon or late decide the question between right and wrong, between humanity and inhumanity; and the first awakening of a nobler, a higher calling than "to have" and "to enjoy"; the first expression of a more lively recognition of God as the only Lord and Father, and of the Earth as a holy place assigned by him to all men for the development of their humane calling, will find its expression everywhere; in the emancipation of all oppressed, also in the emancipation of the Jews. We have a higher object to obtain—and this is entirely in our own hands—the ennobling of ourselves; the realisation of Judaism through Jews. This leads us to the question of "Reform." Certainly, we are far from what we should be. Only look at the picture of life, the execution of which the Torah sets us as our task! What strides we have to make, what distance to traverse, what height to ascend! And therefore, Reform by all means! Let us apply all our power, let us summon everything which is good and noble within us to ascend that height.

Reform ! But its object can be no other except the realisation of Judaism by Jews in our time ; the realisation of that eternal ideal, under the circumstances in which the time has placed us. Education, elevation of the age to the Torah, but not levelling the Torah according to the time, or depressing the summit to the shallowness of our life. . . . That great man to whom, and to whom alone, we owe the preservation of practical Judaism up to our own time, Maimonides, produced much good and much evil, because he reconciled and did not develop Judaism naturally out of itself. His mind was framed in the Arabic-Greek mould, so was his ideal of life. He penetrated Judaism from without, he introduced opinions which he had adopted from elsewhere, and with these he reconciled. . . . What was the consequence ? When these opinions produced their natural results ; when some deemed themselves to be above the guidance of the commandments which were represented to them as nothing but guides, and above the given explanations which had no meaning for them ; others, who had a deeper insight into Judaism, became averse to that philosophical spirit ; others, again, became enemies of all spirit. . . . Only a few in the whole space of that time stood in their investigations purely within Judaism and built it up intellectually out of itself. Conspicuous above all are the author of *Cusri* and Nachmanides.

Theosophy and talmudical topics are considered next.

When the yoke commenced to be slackened, and the spirit again felt some freedom of movement, another brilliant and most estimable person arose to be a leader in the process of development. But neither did this man draw his freer intellectual progress out of Judaism. He was great in metaphysics and æsthetics, he studied the Bible for philological and æsthetical purposes. He did not construe Judaism as a science out of itself. He defended it only against political narrowness and pietistical demands from certain Christians. He was at the same time practically a religious Jew ; he showed his brethren and the world that one can be a strictly religious Jew, *and yet* shine forth and be celebrated as the

Jewish Plato. This *and yet* decided. There was no help for it ; the direction was given and followed, and had to be gone through to its last consequences destructive of Judaism. . . . And there it is that the disease lies. The idea of Judaism is wanting ; the idea in accordance with its history and its teachings ; and, in consequence of this, the love to these latter is wanting, which is the only counterpoise against allurements from without and from within. The spirit inherent in Judaism is the only goal that can save us. Compare with this the reforming tendencies of our time. Be angry with none, respect them all. All feel that there is something wrong ; all intend to promote that which is good, according to their lights ; all have in view the lasting welfare of their brethren. If they have not recognised that which is good ; if they have failed when desiring to grasp at the truth, in most cases it is not their fault ; they share the mistake with past generations. Is, then, this the reform which is wanted, to take up some standpoint or other from outside Judaism ; some foreign idea of human destination or emancipation and now, accordingly, to curtail or enervate the fulness of Judaism ? Is that reform, to stand within Judaism, but Judaism not understood, and merely trim to the requirements of a time which only feels the external appearance of a part of Judaism understood as little—the synagogue service ? . . . And now the schools, which contain all our hopes of the future ! They are as the schools of the time. Youth is trained to make a living by handicraft, trade, art, science. The understanding is partly developed, but in this, also, the memory is being more exercised than the reasoning faculties. But where is the heart formed, Judaism taught, the school penetrated by the Jewish spirit, so that it may at a later time pervade life ? Where are men trained who recognise themselves to live in God's world, with faculties belonging to God, for the execution of his will—who rejoice in their vocation, who ardently and lovingly cleave to the name of "Jew," which summons them to be the bearers of such doctrine through time and fortune, through suffering and want, and, at the same time, to know the world and themselves, to learn history, to understand the present time, and to look upon themselves as building material for the future ?

Two tendencies are opposed to one another. The followers of the one having inherited Judaism, but not understanding it, obey its behests from habit without its spirit; carry it in their hands as a holy mummy, afraid to rouse the spirit. Those on the opposite path partly glow with noble fire for the promotion of the welfare of their brethren, but consider Judaism to be an appearance without spirit, and belonging to a time long gone to its grave. They search for the spirit but do not find it, and in their best endeavours to succour the Jews are in danger of severing the last heart-strings of Judaism from want of knowledge.

And now, when these opposite positions approach each other in thousands of varieties, and therewith demonstrate that both are in error, which remedy is left? Is it sufficient to found schools, to reform the service in the synagogue, on such rent and riven ground? The spirit, the inner principle of life is wanting, and you never succeed in calling it forth by polishing the outer frame.

There is only one remedy. The atonement must arise from the point where the sin was committed. The remedy is this: to forget the hereditary conceptions and misconceptions about Judaism; to take up the sources of Judaism; to read, to study, to comprehend them for practical use; to draw from them the conception Judaism has about God, the world, humanity, Israel. To know, to comprehend Judaism from itself, to raise it out of its contents to a science of practical wisdom. . . . And then, be unconcerned what others may think of your study, whether you will be unable to become conspicuous any longer among the heroes of subtle disputations, subtle indeed, but not doing homage to truth and life as their objects. Be unconcerned whether or not you will be able to become conspicuous in the various branches of knowledge which you study only as auxiliary sciences for your own sake. Be unconcerned whether you will become unfit to shine. You will learn to raise yourself to the light of truth, to the ardour and height of life.

Once there you will understand Israel's vicissitudes and teachings, you will understand life as the impress of such doctrine permeated and saturated with spirit. Spirit in everything, from the structure of the

language to the edifice of life's actions, a spirit inflated by the Spirit of the only God.

That were indeed a work for the disciples of knowledge! But then the results of such science have to be transplanted into real life. Schools for the Jews! The saplings of your nation must be educated to be Jews, to be sons and daughters of Judaism, of such as you learned to know and understand, to respect and love as the life of your life. Let them master the language of the Bible as they master the language of the land in which they dwell. Let them learn to think in either, let their hearts be made to feel, their mind to think. Let the Bible become for them the book from which to learn how to live, and let them be able to perceive its word throughout life! Let their eyes be opened to view the world around them as God's world and themselves as God's servants therein. Let their ear be opened to history as the education of all men to such service. Then let them learn from the written and traditional law in its practical consequences to comprehend, to respect, and to love their life as such spiritual service of God, that they rejoice in the name of Jew and in a life issuing therefrom, in spite of sneers and wants. Let the way they are trained to find a living, as also the gaining of their livelihood in real life, be a means, not an end. Let them be taught to value life not according to position, to wealth, to fame; but according to the inner vocation which is full of real life, of worship of God. Do not let them subordinate the demands of their vocation to the demands of sensuality and comfort, but *vice versd*. And in the meanwhile—until Israel's houses are built up by such sons and daughters of Israel—let us supplicate, let us beg in the houses of the parents that they do not disturb the work of the school, that they in icy coldness or bluntness of spirit, do not nip and kill the young buds in the minds of their children. Let the noble spark be blown into blaze also in the hearts of the parents, and where it is too late for understanding, at least respect be obtained—and would it not then become different in Israel?

It will become different in Israel. Our time leads unmistakably towards it. The time suffers from the pains of labour. Better a



these pains than the painless, but also joyless and hopeless house of the barren woman. It may be that this pain will outlive ourselves, our children, perhaps our grandchildren. But then the grandchild will rejoice in the offspring come to light and life, called "a Judaism which knows itself." The time gives one security for this result. It consists in the tendency to think about, to comprehend, to penetrate into that which is to be the subject of respect. As soon as the mind has recognised the fruitlessness of its endeavours which are devoid alike of foundation and of object; of the complying with the demands of the fleeting moment which are rated above their value; as soon as the mind is penetrated by the consciousness that life must be based only upon idea and truth obtained from within—it will wake up to the questions: "What am I as a Jew?" "What is Judaism?" And we shall no longer try to obtain the solution of that question from the chairs and writings of non-Jewish scholars, who often know Judaism only from its reflection in a distorting mirror, and who believe themselves obliged partly to destroy the Torah and Judaism, in order to construct that which is their own. Nor will they go for solution to the writings of modern reformers who only consider external points; nor to the writings of such Jewish sages as choose the foundations for their system from outside Judaism. But they will turn to the Bible and the Talmud, the fundamental sources of Judaism; presupposing nothing except the endeavour only to comprehend the idea of life out of Judaism, and Judaism as an institution for real life. This will lead to the end, to produce that which is true and vital as truth and life, after the ancient but much forgotten rule—to learn, to teach, to observe, to act.

If Hirsch had done nothing but indicate the true method according to which the essence of Judaism has to be recognised, it would by itself have been a remarkable effort. If he had left to others the task of tracing the truths which he pro-



nounced to be symbolised by the precepts of the Torah; the task of trying, by the rules laid down by him, to induce his brethren to renounce the conventional theories which were destructive of the observance of the Jewish laws, he would already have had great claims to the gratitude of his brethren. Others would perhaps have undertaken to educate Jewish men and women with this object in view. Others would perhaps have created schools for both sexes, which, besides giving sound and sincere religious instruction, would at the same time have been able to pass muster even among the efficient educational establishments as superintended by the authorities in Germany. It is possible that this would have been done. But it is certain that all this and much more was attempted and realised by Hirsch.

Immediately after the *Nineteen Letters* his *Horeb* appeared; which is a concise and lucid compendium of the traditional observances, explained as symbols after the principles laid down by him in his first work. But he was certainly not the first who attempted to explain one or the other of the Jewish laws as symbols; as expressions of certain thoughts which they were meant to represent. But with Hirsch such an idea took quite a unique shape. He subjected his own theories to the most severe criticism. He knew that "Symbolical explanations, when practised in the style of an amateur, could not but be injurious to the knowledge of Judaism; that it would be a mere play of wit, and degenerate into a mere

display of ingenuity. In consequence of this it is easy for every shallow mind, for every mountebank, whenever it suits his purposes, to make such efforts ridiculous in the eye of ignorant people.”<sup>1</sup> He knew the objections which could be raised, and actually were raised, against the proposition that the observances of Judaism were meant to be symbols; that they had for their object to keep some idea alive within us and constantly before our eyes.

He wrote his *Outlines of a Jewish Symbolic*,<sup>2</sup> in which he laid down the rules and guiding principles for the tracing of the ideas underlying the Jewish observances. In these articles he proves beyond doubt that a Jewish Symbolic really does exist, and the “preliminary remarks” in which he dwells on the theory of Symbols in general are a noteworthy sample of a philosophical disquisition. Is this the same eloquent peacher who so often kept his audience spell-bound by the flow of his language, by the ardour with which he impresses his convictions upon his hearers; by the boldness of his metaphors which, never descending to anything bordering upon platitude, always struck home by their aptness and their truth? The sixteen pages containing these “preliminary remarks” are decidedly hard reading. The concatenation of ideas is so close, the logic so severe, the special cases preferred for induction so exhaustive, yet so sparingly used, the illustrations so striking, yet so soberly managed, that to give an extract would mean to reproduce

<sup>1</sup> *Jeshurun*, 1857-1858.

<sup>2</sup> “Grundlinien einer jüdischen Symbolik,” *Jeshurun*, 1857, p. 615.

the whole. To use a homely phrase, you cannot put a pin in. Here as elsewhere Hirsch displays the same judicial combination of induction and deduction, the same consciousness of the limits set to that class of reasoning which no human intellect is able to pass.

There is one ordeal to which every interpretation of a symbol has invariably to submit, and that is, the verification whether the thing or the action recognised to be a symbol proves in all its essential parts, and in its connection with the respective persons, with the conditions of locality and time, with the accompanying words, to be of such a nature that the detected idea can have been the one intended by the author of the symbol. The most ingenious interpretation will have to be dismissed, if opposed to one of these essential conditions. It is the same method and the same result, which ought to prevail in every sober interpretation of any document. A verse may be interpreted differently by ten different commentators, but only that one will be recognised as the correct one, according to which all idiomatical peculiarities and sentences, and the connection of all the relations in which they appear have been taken into account. Neither here nor there mathematical certainty can be obtained. That which is erroneous will, however, be dismissed with the most absolute certainty; and for a positive assumption we shall have to decide after the motive: that after careful consideration, everything which had to be taken into account is of such a nature that the assumption can be true.

Having indicated the method applied by Hirsch in evolving the ideas of which Judaism is the representative, I regret not being able to discuss in the present article the system in which it results. It seems paradoxical to say that his system was the fruit of a few years' thought only, and yet was not completed in a lifetime. In his first pamphlet Hirsch enunciated a system

finished as to its fundamental principles, and thought out as to its details. His whole life was devoted to elucidate the latter, to carry them back to their first principles, to gain for them recognition and adoption by his brethren. All his literary productions must be judged in this light. His Commentaries, the magazine *Jeshurun* edited by him, his critical articles, his polemical writings, his occasional pamphlets, are all of them so many materials necessary to the rearing up of his system. I must for the present satisfy myself with merely mentioning them; but to understand them a searching survey would be necessary.

One of Hirsch's objects, to gain for his views and principles the recognition and adoption of his brethren, was never for a moment lost sight of by him. And he possessed all the qualities necessary to ensure success in this direction. For there was no human instinct of the nobler kind which was not strongly and vividly operating within him. If Hirsch had been no more than a man of profound thought, he would no doubt have made his mark in the world of letters. If in addition to this he had been also a man of genuine and ardent feeling, and of great eloquence, he would certainly have been also great as an orator. But all these qualities, and each of them of the highest order, were in Hirsch combined with all those qualifications which distinguish the man of action. Thought, feeling, and deed were always in harmony. Hirsch's every thought was an

action, he never acted without realising at the same time an idea.

One word about his success as a preacher. With a preacher like Hirsch it is as with a great singer. The effect of the performance must be felt but cannot be described, and is lost to posterity. Whenever in his sermons some struggle, some hesitation was noticed, it was because he was applying to himself the reins, not the spur. He had to restrain the great copiousness in the outpour of ideas, in the exuberant flow of words which suggested themselves to him ; and with the greatest skill he selected on the spur of the moment those that were most fitting. The effect his addresses had on his audience was always electric. Suffice it to say that the instances were by no means few, that men of culture and education entered the synagogue with opinions antagonistic to his, and left it again with serious doubts as to the correctness of their views, to end in becoming his most ardent followers.

But it was by his pedagogical achievements in the founding of and presiding over schools, and by his statesmanlike qualities in the organisation of communities, that he exhibited himself most as a man of action. That he knew his own mind and never acted at random, but always in accordance with settled principles, is evidenced by his many articles on communal affairs. Again I am unable to discuss them, and must therefore request my readers to inquire for themselves if they wish to know Hirsch in quite another character. That his



theories were sound, that his activity proceeded in the right direction, cannot be shown better than by pointing to the congregation which he created in Frankfort-on-the-Main.

"Created," this is the proper expression. Rough material to work with he had hardly any. He commenced his career as Rabbi of the "Religionsgesellschaft" with scarcely a dozen congregants. The site on which he had to rear his structure was of the most unpromising nature. Peter the Great, when selecting a swamp to build his magnificent city on, had not made a less judicious choice than Hirsch when he chose to make Frankfort-on-the-Main the citadel of observant Judaism.<sup>1</sup> Nowhere had the spirit of persecution of Jews by Jews been so prominent as in that city. Fidelity to Jewish observances, the study of Mishna and Talmud, even of the Bible in Hebrew, was being systematically stamped out. The council of that ancient Jewish congregation brought all the strength of the secular authorities to bear upon those of their brethren who still tenaciously clung to the execution of their religious duties. They pursued their fanatical intentions with a tenacity of purpose worthy of a better cause. By the machinations of that council it was, between the year 1818 and 1838, an indictable offence, checked and punished by the police, to teach the young the Bible in Hebrew and the Talmud. Teachers and scholars actually hid themselves in lofts and other hiding-places when studying these

<sup>1</sup> For the following particulars see Hirsch's pamphlet *Die Religion im Bunde mit dem Fortschritt von einem Schwarzen*, Frankfort o/M., 1854.



subjects in order to elude the tyrannical powers of the council. But the latter was on the alert; the hiding-places were discovered; the teachers were banished the city, and those men who had undertaken the care of providing the means for pursuing these studies were forbidden to do so under the penalty of fifty florins each. An educational establishment for the study of the Talmud, together with general secular subjects, to which a generous member had bequeathed the sum of 50,000 florins, was suppressed, and the council boasts of this feat in an official document. Since times immemorial there had existed in Frankfort a society under the name of "Tsitsit Society." One of the objects was for its members to gather every Sabbath after the Synagogal Service in a private house to edify themselves by reading and interpreting certain sections of the Pentateuch and the Prophets. But in 1842 this also was declared to be an indictable offence. The council effected a prohibition of these gatherings, and the society ceased to exist. It would lead me too far to relate how the Burial Society was tyrannised over by the council, and its members deprived of their most sacred, most humane, and noblest privileges. They hindered the restoration and adornment of the two chief synagogues; they neglected one of the most necessary Jewish institutions, and those of the neighbouring townships had to be used by the faithful. They abolished the ancient custom of providing prisoners and such patients as were in non-Jewish hospitals with kosher food. I cannot proceed with a full

enumeration of the malpractices of the council. It seemed as if the council had extinguished the last spark of observant Judaism in Frankfort-on-the-Main.

But eleven men of that city turned themselves, in 1851, to Samson Raphael Hirsch. They asked him to come over to them and help them. Hirsch responded to the call. He resigned his position as Chief Rabbi of Moravia and Silesia, which, besides being a place of honour and dignity, had also considerable emoluments attached to it; he gave up his seat in the Moravian Diet, and went to the assistance of the handful of workers in the cause of freedom of conscience and religion. As far as human efforts are concerned, it was he, and he alone, who must be called the author of that flourishing community called the "Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft," and of those first-class Jewish educational establishments, which are, without exaggeration, the only ones of their kind in the whole world. It would require a separate article to do justice to the statesmanlike qualities in the noblest sense of the word, the unbending force of will, the untiring activity, the knowledge of the world, the powers of organisation and management, and at the same time the stern resistance to any sacrifice of principle, which put the stamp of greatness on this remarkable man.

How was it that Hirsch, who terminated his life in his eighty-first year—on the 31st of December 1888—during a long period of speech and writing, never contradicted himself, never was obliged to recede from positions formerly main-

tained by him? The reason is this: because Hirsch started with that which other great men are often unable to reach at the end of their careers. He did not start before he had carefully examined every detail of his system; before he had measured his own powers and made himself thoroughly acquainted with the nature of the material on which he intended to exert his faculties; before he had prepared himself to wield with master-hand the instruments; before he had traced out in his own mind the kind of opposition he would have to encounter; before he had estimated how much success could be reasonably expected, without dreaming of impossible and miraculous results. It was the rare privilege vouchsafed to this man, that in his life was compressed in its widest and most profound sense that old rule of Judaism which he recommends to his readers, "to learn, to teach, to observe, to execute."





## THE JEWISH SIBYLLINE ORACLES

(1890)

WHEN speaking about the Jewish Sibylline Oracles it will not be necessary for me to enter on an examination of the origin, importance, and probable contents of the genuine Sibylline Oracles of antiquity. No doubt such an inquiry would be not only most profitable, but also highly interesting. The story goes that an unknown old woman came to King Tarquinius with nine books of divine oracles, which she offered him for sale at an enormous price. The king scornfully refused to pay the desired amount, whereupon she burnt three of the books, and demanded the same price for the remaining six. On the king again declining her offer with derision, she calmly burnt three more of the books, and desired the same sum for the three that remained. But now the king was struck by her collected and determined demeanour; he began to consider the matter more seriously, and ended by giving her the full price for the remaining three books. This tale, and others of the same nature, were handed down to posterity in evidence of the great sacredness of the Sibylline Oracles, which were preserved and concealed in the Capitol. They were only consulted on special occasions, and by direct order of the Senate, till they



were burnt with the Capitol in the year of Rome 671. A commission was afterwards sent to several places famous for supposed Sibylline prophecies, in order to replace, as far as possible, the lost collection. The number of Sibylline Oracles which the commissioners found to exist was enormous, but they selected only such as were in their opinion indisputably genuine. The mass of prophetical poems continued to increase, and reached astonishing dimensions. When Augustus became Pontifex Maximus, he had all oracles that were not authenticated destroyed, the Sibylline Books were, however, spared, and occasionally consulted, till they were publicly burnt in the reign of Honorius. But the Roman Oracles were not the only written oracles extant, nor is it certain that they were the oldest. The question whether the Roman Oracles, in spite of the jealous anxiety with which they were kept secret, were not for all that partly or wholly known to the public; the consideration of those few fragments of genuine ancient Oracles that have come down to us, and the results to which such an inquiry must lead, are topics which I am obliged to pass by.

I have to give my attention to counterfeit fabrications, to such portions of that collection of spurious productions which is known under the name of *Χρησμοὶ Σιβυλλιακοὶ*, Sibylline Oracles, as can with the greatest probability be traced back to Jewish authors. I have to limit my inquiry to the investigation of such questions as are best calculated to give a satisfactory

idea of these Jewish Oracles, of the probable age of some of them, of their contents, their origin, and of the kind of criticism which has to be applied to them. Those of my readers who would wish to gain an insight into the whole collection—comprising pieces of Heathenish, Jewish, and Christian origin—I refer to an article on the Sibylline Books which appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* in July, 1877 (vol. cxlvi.). Out of the immense mass of literature on the subject, I shall confine myself to the following few references, which can be said to be of real moment in the investigation of the Jewish Oracles, to which all other inquiries on the subject written since, be they of great or small compass, always return, to discuss them, to decide between their conflicting opinions, while the new suggestions are only of trifling importance.

The modern criticism of the Oracles can be said to commence with Friedrich Bleek's treatise on their origin and composition.<sup>1</sup> Exhaustive in every respect are the two editions and the bulky book of dissertations of Charles Alexandre (Paris, 1841-56-59). Joseph Heinrich Friedlieb edited the Oracles in 1852, with a German metric translation, a long introduction,

<sup>1</sup> Über Entstehung und Zusammenstellung der uns in acht Büchern erhaltenen Sibyllinischen Orakel, in the *Theologische Zeitschrift von Schleiermacher und De Wette* (Berlin, 1819). I doubt whether a copy of this important treatise exists in any of the large libraries in England. See *The Jewish Messiah: a Critical History of the Messianic Idea among the Jews, &c.* By James Drummond (London, 1877), page 11, note 2.

and critical notes. Friedlieb's translation of the third book was reprinted with introductory remarks and notes, under the title of *Alexandrinische Messiashoffnungen*, by Dr. Z. Frankel, of Breslau, in his monthly magazine in 1859. Frankel, as well as Graetz, in the third volume of his *History of the Jews*, follows on the whole Friedlieb's views. But the opinions of Alexandre and Friedlieb found a severe critic in Professor Ewald, in his essay, *Ueber Entstehung, Inhalt und Werth der Sibyllinischen Bücher*, 1858. He altogether differs from the views of Alexandre and Friedlieb, more particularly in reference to the part which is the principal subject of the present inquiry, namely, the third book. In 1857 there appeared in Jena a little work under the title of *Die Jüdische Apokalyptik in ihrer geschichtlicher Entwicklung*, &c., by Dr. A. Hilgenfeld, in which the poem under consideration is subjected to a searching investigation. Hilgenfeld's and Ewald's notions on the third book are essentially the same; they only differ in some points of minor importance. It is remarkable that Ewald does not make any mention of Hilgenfeld's inquiry, although Hilgenfeld's preface is dated January 1857, and Ewald's essay was not produced before September 1858. And, lastly, I have to mention a dissertation on the Jewish Sibylline Oracles, and a treatise on the fourth book by Dr. Benno Wilhelm Badt.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *De Oraculis Sibyllinis a Judæis Compositis*, Pars I. Dissertatio Inauguralis philologica quam . . . defendet Benno Guilelmus Badt. (Breslau, 1869.) Ursprung, Inhalt und Text des vierten Buches der Sibyllischen Orakel von B. Badt. (Breslau, 1878.)

No subsequent inquiries have materially increased our knowledge of the Jewish Sibylline Books.<sup>1</sup>

After this cursory sketch of its critical literature, I return to the subject itself. I called the Oracles spurious; meaning by the word that they are not the Oracles, nor part of the Oracles of the Capitol, neither of those alleged to have been purchased by Tarquinius, nor of the later collection which was deposited there after its restoration. The authors of the older parts of our body of poems may have interwoven some ancient genuine Sibylline productions, as current in antiquity, in their works; but if so, they did it only very sparingly. The Oracles which we have are, without exception, imitations; none of them is a remnant of the emanations from such a source as was recognised in antiquity as truly Sibylline. This, of course, denies them all authority as real prophecies. But in the same manner we should refuse credence to the genuine ancient Oracles. This, however, was not the case with the first teachers of Christianity. There can be no doubt that most of them accepted the Sibylline Oracles as authoritative, and considered them as having emanated from real prophetic inspiration. Paul, the Apostle, must perhaps be cited as the oldest among them. He is quoted by Clemens Alexandrinus as exhorting the heathens to consult

<sup>1</sup> [Since then a translation of the *Proœmium* and books iii.-v. by F. Blass appeared in *Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alter Testaments*, edited by E. Kautzsch, ii. p. 177 sqq. For further literature see E. Schürer, *Gesch. d. jüd. Volkes*, vol. iii.; J. Geffcken's edition of the *Oracula*; id. *Komposition, &c., der Oracula Sibyllina.*]

the writings of the Sibyl for the belief in one God, and for the predictions of future events by her. Alexandre presumes that Clemens must have quoted some apocryphal Pauline book, although he admits that it is neither absurd nor impossible to assume that Paul should have quoted the Sibyl. The same author treats exhaustively<sup>1</sup> of the credit the Oracles enjoyed with the fathers of the Christian Church, and even with later Christian writers. People continued in the Middle Ages to imitate the Oracles, and to prophesy without scruple on comparatively modern historical events. Great Britain has in this way been particularly taken notice of by Sibyls of that class, whose productions were then ascribed to some renowned author quite after the classical style of literary forgery. Thus, an oracle which was most probably composed by some German or Italian towards the end of the twelfth century, was fathered on the Venerable Bede, who lived at the beginning of the eighth century. Bladud, Hudibras, and the hero of so many fables, Cadwalldr, the last king of the Britons, had special attention paid to them by some such Sibyl. Of the latter it is particularly related that he consulted, among other prophecies, also those of the Sibyl. Nay, a meddlesome prophet had something to say even about the Wars of the Roses, and himself took the side of the Yorkists.<sup>2</sup>

Such fabrications, however unimportant in themselves, show

<sup>1</sup> Vol. ii. Excurs. iv. p. 254 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> Alexandre, vol. ii. p. 298.



of what lasting influence the impulse was, as given by those Sibylline authors of old. The belief in their authority was shared by many well-informed writers even of later ages. I shall give two examples of English authors who tenaciously clung to that belief. The first whom I think it worth while to mention, because I have not found his name alluded to in this connection by any author on the subject, is Roger Bacon.<sup>1</sup> He implicitly believed in the prophetic power of the Sibyls, relying on the authority of Augustine and Isidore, and "all the saints." He is quite sure that they promulgated divine oracles, and concludes *a fortiori* that, if such frail women were thus inspired, how much more was this possible for philosophers. The second example is important as a specimen of learned men of a much later period who attached credence to the Oracles even after the belief in their genuineness had already been seriously shaken. William Whiston edited, in 1715, a *Vindication of the Sibylline Oracles, to which are added the genuine Sibylline Oracles themselves, &c.* In this work Whiston admits that most of the Sibylline Books are fictitious; but some of them, namely, those which he reprints, he holds to be not only remnants of the ancient oracles, but also to contain really divine revelation. He says,<sup>2</sup> "It is not reasonable for this age to recede from the ancient opinion in this matter without any new and good evidence to the contrary; but they ought still to allow the

<sup>1</sup> *Opus Majus*, ii. cap. viii. *Opus Tertium*, pp. 79 and 81.

<sup>2</sup> Page 82.



Sibylline Oracles to have been divinely inspired. . . . It appears, therefore, that though God gave positive laws, or an institution of religious worship only to the Jews, and entrusted them only with those divine oracles that related to the same, yet that he did not wholly confine divine inspiration to that nation, but supported the law and religion of nature, and the right worship of himself as the one and true God, among the heathens also, all along by these Oracles till the light of the Christian revelation was spread over the world."

It is needless to state that no Jewish author ever attached any importance to these Oracles. Josephus,<sup>1</sup> in speaking of the Tower of Babel, cites the words from the third book, which I shall have to discuss afterwards. He says, "the Sibyl also" mentions the tower. That he drew from a heathen source, but not from the poem itself, is clear, for the "God" of the poem is, in his quotation, "the Gods." That Philo ever mentioned them is doubtful. In the works of his which we possess no mention of them is made.<sup>2</sup>

After these preliminary remarks, I proceed to consider that part of the collection of which two things are certain: first, that it is the most ancient of all these Oracles; and, secondly, that it was composed by a Jew. There is some difference of opinion as to the constituent parts of the whole poem. Two fragments, namely, have been preserved by Theophilus of

<sup>1</sup> *Antiq.*, I. iv. 3.

<sup>2</sup> See Friedlieb's Introduction, p. 9.

Antioch in his Book to Autolycus, under the name of "the Sibyl." According to Hilgenfeld, Ewald, and others, they are a part of the same poem as the greater portion of the third book. But, according to Alexandre, they exhibit proofs of having been composed, not by a Jewish, but by a Christian author. I shall cite a few verses from the first fragment, in order to give a specimen of its contents, and also to illustrate, by means of them, some of the arguments brought forward by Alexandre for assigning them to a Christian author. The fragment commences: "O mortal men, made of flesh, mere nothings, how are you so full of self-importance, not considering that your life must end? Neither do you tremble at, nor fear God, who governs you; the supreme Lord, who knows, sees, and is aware of all things; who is the Creator who preserves all, who sent his sweet spirit into every one, and made it the governor of all men. There is one God, the only God. He is very great, unbegotten, omnipotent, invisible. He sees everything, but cannot be seen by any mortal. For what flesh can behold with his eyes the celestial, true, and immortal Being who lives in Heaven, since men, who are born mortals, made of bones, veins, and flesh, cannot even bear to look at the beams of the sun. Worship him, the only God, the governor of the world, who alone exists from everlasting to everlasting. He exists from himself, is unbegotten. He governs all things at all times."

It is evident that in these verses, as translated here, there is nothing that could not have been written by a Jew; nay, the

whole tenor of the piece points to a Jew as its author. Alexandre, however, sees in the words: "Who sent his sweet spirit into every one, and made it the governor of all men," a sign that it must have been composed by a Christian. He prints the word Πνεῦμα, Spirit, with a capital letter; and asserts that what is called here the sweet Spirit is nothing but the λόγος, the "Word" of the New Testament, and is equivalent to the Son. He maintains that the expressions used are taken from the first chapter of John, but that the author of our fragment confused the Spirit with the Word or the Son; and adds, that it was an error, common in the first ages of the Church, to confuse these two persons. "Verum, hanc duarum personarum, saltem sermone tenuis, confusionem primis ecclesiæ temporibus vulgatam fuisse, certum est." And he considers the words, "Who sent his sweet Spirit into every one, and made it the governor of all men," only a reproduction of the sentence in John i. 9: "That was the light which lighteth every man that comes into the world." Gfrörer<sup>1</sup> proves from Philo's writings that the word πνεῦμα was well known to Hellenistic Jewish authors, and is equivalent to νοῦς, Intellect. This is true enough. But really we need not confine ourselves to this technical meaning of the word πνεῦμα in order to understand this passage. Our author did nothing but reproduce the words of Genesis, "And he breathed in his nostrils the breath of life, or the spirit of life," taking them in the same sense as they are understood by many

<sup>1</sup> *Philo und die Alexandrinische Theosophie*, ii. p. 124.

Jewish commentators, among others by Nachmanides and Mendelssohn.

Alexandre finds also evidences of a Christian authorship in the following expressions (ver. 23): "You walk in pride and madness, leaving the straight way; you wander through rocky and thorny paths. O vain men! Cease to wander in darkness, in a black and obscure night. Leave the darkness of the night and enter into light. Behold, he is manifest to all, and does not deceive. Come, and do not pursue this thick darkness; behold the pleasant light of the sun shining gloriously." Alexandre avers that the light mentioned here cannot mean anything else but the light of Christianity. Well, to the unprejudiced mind it is obvious that "he" in this passage refers to God. The poet admonishes the Gentiles to forsake their dark superstitions for the light of truth, and to return to God, whose light shines bright and is a guide to all men.

Besides these large fragments, there are two small ones, one of which was preserved by Lactantius, and the other by Theophilus. Both belong most probably to the section under discussion. The one of them argues: "If it were true that gods were born to continue alive and to be immortal, there would be in the end more gods than human beings, and no standing-room would be left for the mortals." A heathen, if he were only orthodox enough or frivolous enough, could easily have met this argument. We know, namely, the myth according to which Saturn devoured some of his children. We see, therefore, that the notion of

immortality does not exclude the possibility of being eaten when young. This expedient could thus be resorted to by the older and more hungry gods, whenever such an over-population of gods should threaten to become in the least troublesome. This would not be a survival of the fittest, but of those endowed with the best appetites. However, to speak seriously, the objection must certainly have sounded most awkwardly on the ears of a faithful pagan. Now it is true that a Christian could have made use of such words on other occasions. Yet he would hardly have employed them in an address to the heathens, and thus have provided his opponents with a cue for retorting on him.<sup>1</sup> Nor would a Christian have said to them, that he is a God who cannot be seen by any mortal. He would not have called him invisible, unbegotten, nor would he have used the expression which we find in the second large fragment,<sup>2</sup> that a God cannot possibly be created from the loins of a man or woman. All these expressions show to demonstration that the author of these fragments was a Jew. The fact that in the second fragment the folly is shown of worshipping serpents, dogs, cats, and birds, and images of stone, or heaps of stone, shows clearly that the author lived in Egypt, where such forms of idolatry were most rampant.

These fragments were, according to Ewald and others, part and parcel of that celebrated Sibylline Oracle which commences with the 97th verse of the third book. It is, as said before, the

<sup>1</sup> See Badt, p. 17.    <sup>2</sup> v. 40, Alexandre—Zweites Fragm., I, 2 Friedlieb.



most ancient portion of the whole collection, and is unmistakably of Jewish origin. The two large fragments were quoted by Theophilus as belonging to "the Sibyl." Besides these two pieces, Theophilus also cites two other short passages, one of which we find in the third book. Now Theophilus speaks all along only of one Sibyl; all the verses quoted by him must therefore have occurred in the same piece. Lactantius mentions part of the proemium (this is the title our fragments bear in the editions) as belonging to the Erythraean Sibyl, but he quotes also another passage, which we find in the third book. We know that he ascribed the body of our poem to the Erythraean Sibyl. It is evident that the fragments and the bulk of the third book were to him also one whole poem. We may, therefore, unhesitatingly assume that the poem, as continued in the greater part of the third book, commenced with the address to the Gentiles, preserved by Theophilus.

Between this latter fragment and its continuation, as we find it in Book iii., v. 97, there must have been some verses which are lost. According to Ewald, a rather large passage is missing. Let us read the last words of the proemium and its continuation in the third book, and then consider what it was that may have filled up the existing gap. The end of the fragment is: "To him who has the power of life and of incorruptible and eternal light, and who can give to men joys exceeding all the sweetness of honey, to him alone bend the neck, and follow the way of eternal righteousness. But you have forsaken all



these ; you have drunk a cupful of the unmixed wine of God's vengeance, which is very strong and thick, by your madness and folly. Neither are you willing to become sober and sound in your minds to know the true God and King, whose providence is over all things. Wherefore the burning of a fervent fire shall seize on you, and you shall burn in flames continually for ever ; and be ashamed of your unprofitable false images. But they who worship the true and eternal God shall inherit life. They shall inhabit the flourishing garden of Paradise, and there feast on the sweet bread which comes from the starry skies." Thus the fragment ends, and Book iii., v. 97, proceeds :—" But when the threats of the great God will be accomplished, with which he once threatened the men who built the tower in the country of Assyria—all spoke the same speech, and they wished to ascend to the starry heavens. Then the immortal God sent violent storms, and the wind overthrew the great tower, which excited mutual contention among them. Therefore men gave to that city the name of Babylon."

Ewald contends that the Sibyl was obliged, after the powerful exhortation to the heathens, to enter on a narrative about the creation of the world and of mankind. She probably also mentioned the Flood. Then she went on to speak of the wickedness of the human race, which grew constantly, and (thus the Sibyl prophesied) will go on growing till the time of the Messiah. This led her to mention the threat of the Messianic judgment, and to foretell a subsequent completion of the empire

of that nation, which now already was the bearer of the true religion. And at this point she continues: "But when the threats of the great God will be accomplished, with which he once threatened the men, who built the tower in the country of Assyria."

No doubt, a passage exhibiting this flow of ideas, in the regularity of their sequence as suggested by Ewald, would be splendid indeed, if only we possessed it. But it is lost, if ever it did exist. It is true that there is nothing in Theophilus's fragments that could be called threatenings; therefore something about threats must have preceded the opening verses. But it is doubtful whether we must assume the loss of such an elaborate composition as Ewald speaks of. And what does Ewald mean when he says that the Sibyl prophesies the triumph of that religion which *already now* flourishes in some nations of the earth? Now already! When? At what time must we imagine the Sibyl to utter her prophecies?

In my opinion some verses may have become lost between the so-called proœmium and verse 97 of the third book. The poem was certainly rather roughly handled by the compiler of the Sibylline Books and before his time. A portion of it was not taken up into the collection. The poem was lacerated, a piece thrust out, the best part of it tacked on to the first ninety-six verses of the third book, which do not belong to it. Thus, the only thing to be surprised at is that so much of it has been

saved. Nevertheless it does not seem to me that the poem as a whole suffered so much as Ewald supposes.

To prove this I must stop for a moment to consider the question already touched upon before, about the time at which the pretended Sibyl wishes us to believe that she produced her vaticinations. Now it has been observed by more than one critic that our Sibyl plays her part remarkably well. She rarely forgets herself. She meets all questions that could arise as to her genuineness by her diction, by her tone, by the figures she employs, and by the direct information she imparts. One of the objections to be anticipated from some sceptic or other would be what is her origin, and how is it that a Sibyl, whose sole object is the glorification of the Jewish nation, of its religious tenets, and its Messianic hopes, should try to attain her object by speaking Greek to Greeks.

Sensible of this incongruity, she obviates any such objection by concluding her prophecies with the following words (verses 808-811):—"These things I prophesied concerning God's wrath upon men, when driven by madness I left the high walls of Babylon in Assyria, sent as a fire to Greece, to prophesy to men these divine enigmas." These words I consider to be the conclusion of the whole poem. By Babylon she means the Babylon of old. She professes to have been sent from Babylon to disclose the future to the Greeks. She pretends to have lived at the time when all people still spoke the same speech, and to have witnessed the dispersion of the human race, on

which occasion she herself left Babylon for Greece, sent to its inhabitants to lift the veil which conceals the future. She was called by some the Hebrew Sibyl, because of the contents of her prophecies, which only tend to the exaltation of the Hebrew race. But on account of the information she gives here of herself some called her the Babylonian, others the Chaldaean Sibyl. And now the reason is obvious why she commences her predictions with the history of the Tower of Babel. If this explanation is correct, the gap between the introductory address to the Gentiles and the historical part cannot be very considerable.

I do not ignore the difficulties of this explanation. I must assume that all the seventeen verses after verse 811 are later additions. It is true Bleek also rejected them, but he also rejects the passage which I consider as the conclusion of the whole poem. Others believe that only the last eleven verses are fictitious. Ewald, however, defends the whole passage, which runs as follows:—"These things I prophesy concerning God's wrath upon mortal men, when driven by madness I left the high walls of Babylon in Assyria, sent as a fire to Greece, to prophesy to men these divine enigmas. And the people of Hellas say that I am from another country, from Erythrae, and call me shameless. Others call me mad, the lying Sibyl, the daughter of Circe and Gnostos. But when all shall be fulfilled, then you will remember me, and nobody would call me, the prophetess of the great God, mad. He disclosed to me the past about my parents as well as generally, and God sent me to speak to

mortals of the past and of the future. For when the world was deluged by the waters, only one good man was left in a house made of wood floating on the waters, with animals and birds, that the world might be filled again. Then I was his daughter-in-law, and of his blood. To him the former things were shown and the last; therefore everything said by me is true."

Ewald's words in explanation of this passage, which he assumes to be genuine, are as follows: "The poet desired, above all, to invent a suitable Sibyl, who could speak his words for him as they flowed from his heart. According to the vv. 812-815, he found two Sibyls of fame and authority among the Greeks; namely, the Erythraean, whose fame was of long standing, and another in Italy, whom, it is true, he does not call the Cumaean, but who is sufficiently designated as belonging to Italy, by being called by him the daughter of Circe and Gnostos. He was evidently very well acquainted with the verses that were current under the names of such Sibyls, and he was obliged to follow their manner. But the Sibyl who speaks for him must stand high above these; and this must be the case even if the Erythraean Sibyl had not already been called shameless by the Greeks, and the Italian one lying, as the poet thinks was done in his days."

Now, it must be admitted, that if all these verses are genuine, we must assume that a large portion of the beginning of the historical part of our poem has disappeared. For although the first event mentioned in the Bible after the history of the

deluge is the dispersion of men at the building of the tower, yet the Sibyl says that it was also her vocation to speak of things past. But I cannot acquiesce in Ewald's theory about the genuineness of that passage in which she calls herself Noah's daughter. Even that part of the epilogue in which she deprecates being confounded with the Erythraean Sibyl, or with the daughter of Circe and Gnostos,<sup>1</sup> is more than suspicious. Not to speak of Bleek's objections, which Badt considers to have been fully met by Hilgenfeld, I ask, how can we possibly believe that the author of v. 809 could immediately afterwards have written vv. 815-817? She says of herself, "When I was mad, οἰστρομανής." It seems here to be taken as a highly respectable attribute for a Sibyl. But a few verses after she says, "Many call me mad, μαινομένη, but in time it will be recognised that I am not mad." Here mad is evidently taken in a bad sense, and uttered in one breath with ψευστείπα, lying. If being οἰστρομανής (furious, mad, a maniac) is such a great recommendation in one respectable Sibyl, why should it be a blame in others? Or, on the other hand, if it is a disgrace for a Sibyl to be a maniac, why should she profess herself to be such? For the word οἰστρομανής just as the more classical οἰστροπλήξ, literally, "stung by the gadfly," and μαινόμενος mean the same thing, "mad." Therefore I maintain that the author of 808-811 was not the same as the one who wrote the subsequent passage.

<sup>1</sup> Or "of Circe and an unknown father."



The motive for making the addition was this. The author of our poem, who certainly followed the pattern of the older Sibylline poems, imitated some of the verses which were known as belonging to the Erythraean and to the Cumaean Sibyl. Our piece, when it was first produced, was called a Sibylline oracle. Some, as is evident from the passage in question, called it an oracle of the Erythraean, others of the Cumaean Sibyl, according to the esteem in which they held either prophetess. But in the confusion of Greek and Oriental legends, there were some who invented a Hebrew or Jewish Sibyl, according to the tenor of the poem; some assumed a Babylonian or Chaldaean Sibyl, from the information she gives of herself. These fables were further spun out, and the Queen of Saba, whom some called Nicaula,<sup>1</sup> was credited with Sibylline qualities. This led some to call the Sibyl right out Saba, which again was altered into Sambethae.<sup>2</sup> But some one, probably a Christian, in the early times of Christianity, must have been shocked by the fact that such holy things, which he fully believed to be real predictions, should be ascribed to heathenish false prophetesses. He, therefore, in vindication of his prophetess, who professed to be of Babylon, added these verses: "May they call her the Erythraean, or the Cumaean, and not the Babylonian Sibyl; there will be a time that they will acknowledge her as the prophetess of the great

<sup>1</sup> Thus in ספר יחזקין (עקואלה) ניקולאה (ed. Filipowski, *Antiq.*, VIII. vi. 2. most probably from Josephus, *Antiq.*, VIII. vi. 2.

<sup>2</sup> See Alexandre, ii. p. 82 *sqq.*

God." He dismissed both Sibyls with a compliment or two. The Erythraean he calls shameless, the other a lying maniac, quite forgetting, in his zeal, that being a maniac is a quality of which a true Sibyl ought to be proud, and which his own client ascribed to herself.

That the last part, in which she calls herself a daughter-in-law of Noah, is spurious, is evident simply from the fact that Noah is said to have been the only man (*τις ἀνὴρ μόνος*) who was saved with animals and birds. The whole passage is very corrupt. Ewald tries to doctor it by alterations of the text and explanations. But certainly *ἀνὴρ μόνος* means only one man; and this is in contradiction with the narrative of Genesis, where there are four. Such a blunder could have been made by one of the authors of some of the other books, who sometimes betray a merely superficial acquaintance with the Pentateuch; but not by the author of the third book, who displays all through an intimate knowledge of the Bible.

That the poet ascribes the destruction of the tower to the winds presents no difficulty. It is an essentially Jewish tradition: it is found in the Ritual of the German Jews, and in some other Jewish books.<sup>1</sup>

Our poet next gives a narrative of the fight of the Titans. He says that, ten generations after the Flood, Kronos, Titan, and Iapetos reigned on earth. They were the sons of Ouranos

<sup>1</sup> In a piece recited on the Day of Atonement, beginning *אמין כה*; and in the *בשל הטורים* s. v. *יחדלן*. It was evidently an old Midrash.

and Gaia, of Heaven and Earth. This couple received these names because they were so extremely good. The sons ought to have reigned each over a third part of the earth ; but when their father died the sons fought for the supremacy. The struggle was particularly fierce between Kronos and Titan ; but by the interference of Rhea, Gaea, Aphrodite, Demeter, and Dione, a compact was entered into between Kronos and Titan, that Kronos should have the sovereignty for life, but that it should devolve on Titan after his demise. To prevent the kingship being withheld from Titan by Kronos's sons, the following measure was adopted : The Titans were watchful whenever Rhea gave birth to a child. Twice already they had destroyed Kronos's male issue ; but the third time Rhea was delivered of twins, Hera and Zeus. Hera was born first. When the Titans saw that a girl was born they went away satisfied, and Rhea contrived to save Zeus. She also managed to save Poseidon and Pluto. When the Titans saw that they had been deceived, Titan came with sixty sons and kept Kronos and Rhea in prison. But the latter's sons waged war with the Titans, and this was the first of all wars.

The general opinion is that here the author closely followed the narrative of the fight of the Titans, as found in Hesiod's *Theogony*, with the exception of such alterations as were demanded by the monotheistic view of the author. He, therefore, changed Hesiod's gods into human beings, made them dwell on

earth, and remoulded the myth so as to make it appear to be a piece of ancient history.

I myself do not think that our author took all this trouble. I am of opinion that he found these alterations ready to hand. Hilgenfeld says that he explained the myth after the Euhemeristic fashion; but I am convinced that all he did was to put the words of Euhemeros into verse.

There lived about the year 300 before the Christian era a man called Euhemeros, most probably a native of Messana, in Sicily, who, induced by his protector, King Cassander of Macedonia, composed one of the most curious books that ever were written. He called it *ἱερὰ ἀναγραφὴ*—Sacred History. In this book he started the theory that the gods were in reality human beings who had been deified after their death. The geography, topography, and archaeology, which he required to prove his propositions, he invented himself. He declared that on his travels he had read of the most important actions of Ouranos, Kronos, and Zeus, in an inscription on a golden column in the temple of Zeus Triphylios, on the island of Panchaea, in the Southern Ocean. Now this island was not situated in the Southern Ocean; the only place of its existence was in the fertile brain of Euhemeros. This Sacred History is lost; but the quotations from this book, as given by some authors, together with the fragments of the Latin translation by the poet Ennius, sufficiently prove that Euhemeros' account of the strife with the Titans is essentially the same as that given by the Sibyllist.

His very expressions often correspond to the letter with those in the Sibylline account. Ouranos was, according to Euhemerus, a mighty king, who owed his name to his great knowledge of astronomy. It would only be repeating the Sibyl to give his version of the Titanic quarrels. Euhemerus was called a wicked atheist by his contemporaries and by some later authors. In the present age of comparative mythology his method is called shallow, unpoetical, and unscientific. But, however easy it may be to sneer at his system, it was, nevertheless, a mighty effort in his days, and produced great consequences.

When we consider the eagerness with which new theories are taken hold of by some people, who are dazzled by their novelty and their plausibility, we must not be surprised that the learned Jews of Alexandria, having become acquainted with the imposing mass of Greek myths, were only too glad to find a system ready at hand by means of which they could reconcile them with their own monotheistic notions. I do not doubt but that they really believed the myths to be ancient history, which had been corrupted by the stupid, idol-ridden crowd. To them Euhemerus must have appeared in the light of a beneficent sage, and his system as the acme of wisdom. That his whole theory has been exploded is a fate that has been, and will be, met with by many systems which in their day were worshipped as oracles.

After the narrative of the Titanic war, our Sibyl begins to prophesy in good earnest. She narrates how the word of the

great God flew into her heart, and bade her prophesy to all mankind. The house of Solomon will reign over the horsemen of Phoenicia and Macedonia and the isles. A second nation will be the Hellenic-Macedonian power, and then the Romans will rule over many countries and terrify all kings. Their avarice and greed will cause much misery to mankind until the reign of the *seventh* king of Hellenic origin over Egypt. Then the people of God will be strong again, and be the guides of life to mortals.

Here we have reached one of the moot points at issue between Alexandre and Ewald. If we reckon from Alexander the Great as the first king, the seventh will be Ptolemaeus VI. Philometor. He was taken prisoner by Antiochus Epiphanes in 170, and died in 146. Now, if we assume with Alexandre that by "the seventh king" Philometor was meant, then our oracle must have been composed before 170, for after that time Philometor was neither the sole nor the undisputed possessor of the throne. In that case a large portion of the third book (vv. 295-488) cannot belong to our Sibyllist, because it contains allusions to events after Philometor's time. Alexandre, therefore, assigns that piece to a much later period. But if we assume, with Ewald and others, that the seventh king is Ptolemaeus Physcon, then all those allusions may refer to contemporary facts, and the piece in question would be an integral part of our oracle, and the whole written during the latter years of Physcon, when he wielded undisputed power. When com-



paring the arguments of Ewald and of Alexandre, it appears that Ewald, as Hilgenfeld before him, has proved his propositions, and the piece relegated by Alexandre to a later time has to be considered as a portion of our poem. It is curious that the author of the article in the *Edinburgh Review*, who follows Ewald's guidance all along, agrees on this point with Alexandre. He says that it seems quite impossible that a pretending prophet, writing at any period subsequent to the successful rising under Judas Maccabaeus, or at least to the death of Simon in the year 156, could have given utterance, in the form of a prediction, to the high hopes which are embodied in these verses.

But, first of all, Simon did not die in 156, but in 135; and, secondly, why could not such hopes be fostered by a poet living at the time of John Hyrcanus? But granted even that the poem dates from the early years of Simon, even in that case our author could have lived in the days of Physcon, for when Simon became High Priest, Philometor had been dead already for three years.

The Sibyl, speaking of the Jews, prophesies that misfortune will befall the pious men, who live about the temple of Solomon, who have their origin from Ur of the Chaldees. They do not turn themselves to the circuit of the sun, or of the moon, nor to monstrous phenomena on earth, nor to sorcerers, nor charmers, nor ventriloquism, nor Chaldaean astrology, nor to the stars. They practise justice and virtue without greed for money.

They have just weights and measures. They do not rob each other, nor remove the landmarks of their neighbours. The rich does not grieve the poor, nor oppress the widow, but rather assists them, giving them part of the harvest, in obedience to the sacred law of God. A description follows of their miraculous wanderings through the desert under Moses' leadership. God gave the law from Heaven, which they must faithfully observe. But they would have to leave their splendid temple and their country. Every land, every sea, will be full of them, but their own land will be empty of them. Their fortified hill, the temple of the great God, and the high walls, all will be cast to the earth, because of their sins and idolatry. They will be slighted by every one for their customs. But happiness and great honour would return after seventy years of hardship. There is a royal clan whose family will not go down. It will reign in the course of time, and commence to build the temple of God. The poet alludes here to Zerubbabel, who was of the house of David. The kings of Persia, he continues, will assist. God himself will give a holy dream in the night, and then the temple will be again as it was before. Our pretended Sibyl maintains her assumed part by feigning to be exhausted. She prays to God to relieve her, but God again orders her to prophesy to the whole earth.

She first addresses Babylon, foretelling her utter ruin and destruction for having overthrown the temple. This passage is most poetical; in it, however, the Sibyl, in her ecstasies, seems

to forget for once the part she plays, and shows her true colours in verses 312, 313: "And thou shalt be filled with blood, as thou hast *formerly* spilt the blood of good and righteous men, which *even now* cries to Heaven." So difficult it is, even for ever so dexterous an imitator, to keep up a *rôle* throughout a work of about a thousand lines.

The next vaticination is about Egypt (314-318), in which again the seventh generation of kings is mentioned. Thereupon follow predictions about Gog and Magog, and the Libyans, and about the miseries of a great many cities. Passages, like the one that follows next, describing the great power and predicting the ultimate fall of Rome, chiefly induced many learned men to consider a great part of the poem as having been written at a later date. Rome, they argue, had not risen yet to that power at the time of the poet of the other parts; neither could he have known of any reverses the Romans had sustained, nor of the full prosperity of that nation. But if the poem was composed in the later days of Ptolemaeus Physcon, after the fall of Corinth and Carthage, the poet could have justly described Rome as risen from earth to heaven. That he alludes to the ultimate fall of the virgin, the daughter of Rome, as he calls her—in imitation of the biblical "virgin, daughter of Zion"—has its ground in the conviction of the Jewish author that it was to be a king from the holy land who would dictate in the end to the nations of the earth.

After this follow the remarkable words :—

Ἔσται καὶ Σάμος ἄμμος, ἐσείται Δῆλος ἄδηλος καὶ Ῥώμη ρύμη,  
 “Samos will become a heap of sand (ammos), Delos will disappear (adelos), Rome will be a village (rume).” I abstain, in going through the contents of our poem, from pointing out the places in Holy Writ to which the author refers; but I must make an exception in this case. First, because I am not aware that it has been pointed out before that this play upon words is an imitation of Zephaniah ii. 4. There we find a prophecy about Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Ekron: “For Gaza shall be forsaken and Ashkelon a desolate place; they shall drive Ashdod out at noon, and Ekron shall be uprooted.” About the first and the last cities the Hebrew text reads:

ני עזה עזובה תהיה . . . ועקרון תעקר

The prophet is rather utilising the similarity of sound in עזה עזובה and עקרון תעקר than playing upon the words; the expressions are placed at the beginning and end of the sentence, and thus avoid offending good taste. In imitation of this our Sibyllist brings in his predictions about Samos, Delos, and Rome, in three consecutive puns.

And, secondly, if my surmise about an imitation of Zephaniah is correct, it would settle another point which is not without importance. For if the poet observed the play upon words in Zephaniah he must have read the Bible in Hebrew, for it is lost and quite unnoticeable in any translation. This circumstance would at once raise our author above some other Jewish

Hellenistic writers—not, perhaps, excepting even Philo—whose knowledge of the Bible was only acquired from translations, because they were ignorant of the Hebrew tongue.

The author proceeds to depict the Messianic period. But that time will not come soon, other events will precede it. He alludes to Alexander of Macedon as a pretended descendant of Jupiter, but in reality, he says, he is the offspring of slaves. He mentions the conquest of Macedon by the Romans; and consequently cannot have written before 146. He pays special attention to the fate of the Seleucids in an obscure passage, which has been satisfactorily explained by Hilgenfeld and Ewald, as referring to Antiochus Epiphanes, Alexander Balas, and Tryphon. The poet speaks of Troy, and calls Homer a lying writer, who certainly has much wit and eloquence, but borrowed from her, the Sibyl. After many predictions about Rome and various other heathen countries, the Sibyl was again exhausted, but God commanded her again to speak. This part is chiefly devoted to the glorification of the Jewish nation, the holy stock of righteous men, who will observe the counsels of the supreme God and will honour his temple by offerings. They do not serve idols, but every morning when they rise from their beds they consecrate their hands with water before honouring God, and above all they will be mindful of holy wedlock. And after a description of the misfortunes and disturbances in nature which will precede that happy consummation, the Sibyl concludes with the words which I have discussed already, and



which form, in my opinion, the natural conclusion of the whole poem.

Having thus given an outline of the contents of the greater part of the third book, I shall only add a few words about the other oracles which are presumably of Jewish origin. The first ninety-six verses were in my opinion not written by a Jew. A Jewish authorship can only be assumed by the most forced arguments, by a disputable explanation of the words ἐκ Σεβαστηνῶν, by assuming that the name Beliar (Belial), as a proper noun and applied to a kind of enemy of man, of an Anti-Christ, was a Jewish conception,<sup>1</sup> and the like.

The fourth book is most probably the work of a Jew, nor is there any ground to assume with Hilgenfeld, Ewald, and Delaunay,<sup>2</sup> that it was written by an Essene. When he speaks in depreciating words of a temple, he means, as is evident from the context, heathen temples. When he says: "Happy will be those men who will love the great God, praying before eating and drinking," he alludes to an absolutely Jewish rite, not one which, according to Ewald, points to an Essene. Nor is it a proof of either Christian or Essene authorship when he says: "They abrogate all temples and altars, the seats of dumb

<sup>1</sup> Neither for the use of that word as a proper noun, nor for the whole conception, does any foundation exist in Jewish writings. Ewald's remark (p. 56) that there exists no Antichrist against the more lifeless Jewish Messiah, is very striking.

<sup>2</sup> *Moines et Sibylles dans l'antiquité Judeo-Grecque*. Paris, 1874. This author scents Essenism everywhere.



stones, soiled with the blood of animals"; for here again he speaks only of idol worship. They are soiled by the blood of offerings, but the same thing in the temple of the Jews, which was already destroyed, would tend to the glory of God. And thus he adds immediately (line 30) βλέψουσιν δ' ἐνδὸς θεοῦ εἰς μέγα κῦδος. There is nothing strange in the fact of a man blaming in one case the very thing which, under other circumstances, he would praise. He is not indifferent to the destruction of the temple, which he calls the temple of God. And when he summons the heathens to repent, to turn to God, and "to bathe their whole body in rivers," he simply alludes to the bath which Jewish law demands of every proselyte. "They do not murder, nor steal, nor covet another man's wife, nor do they commit unnatural vices. Other people do not imitate such piety and such manners, but sneer and laugh at them in their folly, and impute to them their evil doings. For the whole human race is incredulous, δύσπιστον." Thus at least the passage is usually translated. But I think δύσπιστον is to be taken in the less classical, passive meaning of untrustworthy, lying, in which sense the word is used by some later authors, and that the sentence is a reproduction of Psalm cxvi. 11, "all men are lying." The complaint about being laughed and sneered at, and having the evil doings of others imputed to them, is really quite in keeping with experiences of the Jews of all ages, and must certainly have emanated from a Jewish source.

The fifth book was also undoubtedly composed by a Jew.

It breathes the most unbounded patriotism, and has peculiar beauties of its own. All alleged traces of a Christian authorship of this book vanish one by one on closer inspection. And that passage which was thought to be the clearest evidence of the author's Christian persuasion, is nothing but the hope of a reappearance of Moses. The words are: "But an excellent man will again come from Heaven, the best of the Hebrews, whose hands approached the fruitful stick, who once stayed the sun, and spoke with beautiful speech and holy lips."<sup>1</sup> By the "fruitful wood" the rod of Aaron is meant (Numbers xvii. 17 *sqq.*), but it was explained as alluding to the cross. Ewald, however,<sup>2</sup> understands the words as expressing the hope of a reappearance of Moses; but he gives no explanation. Badt gives only a confused explanation, because, like all commentators, he finds that mention is here made of Joshua, ὃς ἡλίον ποτε στήσε, who caused the sun to stand still. Who else can be meant here if not Joshua? The fact is that no mention whatever is made here of Joshua. But who else caused the sun to stand still, if not Joshua? Well, Moses himself, according to very old Jewish traditions, of which records are found in Talmud and Midrash. Moses is represented as having performed that miracle on two occasions. We read in Midrash Tanchuma:<sup>3</sup> "His hands were steady until the going down of the sun.' The Amalekites had calculated the hours by means of their

<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy xxxii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> P. 56, note 5.

<sup>3</sup> Exodus xvii. 18. Cf. Rashi.

astrology. But Moses caused sun and moon to stand still, and confused their hours, and it is this to which the prophet Habakkuk alludes,<sup>1</sup> when he says:—He (Moses understood) lifted up his hands on high. The sun and moon stood still.” The second occasion was during the war with Og, King of Bashan (or with Sihon, King of the Amorites.<sup>2</sup> The Sibyllist thus speaks only of Moses, who by lifting his staff stayed the sun and thus defeated the Amalekites and the Amorites, all perfectly in accordance with ancient Jewish traditions. The whole book would deserve a more minute analysis, but space does not allow it.

After all, on considering the Jewish Sibylline Oracles, the chief interest centres in the poem of which I have given a fuller description, namely, the third book. The whole is pervaded with a spirit of the purest monotheism. The author's love for his country and his race, his unshaken attachment to Jerusalem, his profound veneration of the law of God, are evident in almost every line. The ultimate greatness of the Jewish nation, the glorious restoration of Jerusalem, and the acknowledgment by the whole world of the religious doctrines of the Jews are to him not matters of faith, but certainty. His diction abounds with expressions taken from the Hebrew prophets, in whose works, it is plain, he was well read. Gfrörer has proved that his philosophical and ethical views are those of the learned

<sup>1</sup> Ch. iii., end of verse 10 and beginning of verse 11.

<sup>2</sup> Talmud b. *Taanith*, 20a, Aboda Zara, 25a. Cf. Rashi, Deuteronomy ii. 25.

Alexandrian Jews of his age. As a poem, his work may rank among the best productions of all ages. A special affection for Hellas is apparent; the author evidently endeavours to amalgamate the myths, the wisdom, and the poetry of Greece with the history and lore of Israel. But, as Ewald truly says, Hellas gave him only the rough material, and the outer garment; she furnished him only with her language and with a number of phrases, but it is Israel that supplied him with the spirit which animates the whole.

In his endeavour not to display his true colours, he only mentioned such biblical precepts, the expediency and utility of which can be easily understood, the מצות שכליות, משפטים. He excludes the חקים, מצות שמעיות, commandments of obedience, ritualistic commandments. That he mentions offerings, which are certainly ritualistic, is accounted for by the fact that the idea of sacrifices was not foreign to the Greek mind. Such precepts as have an exclusively national importance are also omitted. Not even the Sabbath is mentioned.

Our author bears in this respect a close resemblance to Pseudo-Phocylides, whose work must be named here, although it is not of a Sibylline character. For the compiler of our collection, when he was tinkering together the most heterogeneous elements, thought good to insert in the undoubtedly Christian second book ninety-three verses from the Pseudo-Phocylidean poem.

This false Phocylides was in reality a Jew, the question

about whom has been finally settled by the late Jacob Bernays.<sup>1</sup> But in one point our author stands high above Pseudo-Phocylides; for the latter never openly and candidly condemns idolatry. In his endeavours to be taken for the ancient Phocylides, he is satisfied with keeping his aphorisms free from polytheistic colouring. Our Sibyllist, on the contrary, fearlessly and vigorously denounces idolatry in all its phases.

That he chose to promulgate his thoughts and feelings under the disguise of a Sibyl, must be accounted for by the times and the surroundings of the author. The two centuries after Ptolemaeus Philadelphus were most fertile in the production of apocryphal books. But the growth of fictitious books was by no means confined to that period. When Bernays says that the profession of fabricating spurious books commenced with the attempts of Onomacritus, in the time of Pisistratus, and lasted till late in the Middle Ages, this is only to be understood of such books as were written in Greek. Generally speaking, however, what Richard Bentley said is true, that the making of spurious books is almost as old as letters. But the period mentioned before was particularly prolific in that branch of workmanship. The rivalry and competition between the courts of Alexandria and Pergamus in enriching their libraries certainly gave a great impetus to that kind of activity, which was

<sup>1</sup> Some of his opinions have been opposed, but not with sufficient arguments.

industriously pursued by people of all creeds. But it would be a mistake to apply the same hard and fast rule to all works of that kind, and to hold, for instance, Ovid guilty of fraud for his epistles of heroes and heroines equally with downright forgers.

The Jews of Alexandria also occupied themselves to a great extent with that kind of work. We must, therefore, not be surprised, however sad it may be, that there were Christian scholars who put the whole stigma attached to such fraudulent authorship upon the Jews. Valckenaer, in his learned essay on the Jew Aristobulus, shows that this teacher of Ptolemaeus was a great culprit in that line. But he lays more to his charge than he really committed; and, says Valckenaer, he was so glad to find that a Jew and not a Christian was the author of those forgeries; for, although his was a pious fraud, yet he much rather sees a lying Jew the cheat than a Christian. That he himself in his essay has to speak of religious forgeries committed by Christians is of no account, as it seems. Even the great Böckh, so well known also for his humanity, in one of his earlier writings<sup>1</sup> speaks, in connection with some verses falsely ascribed to the tragic poet, of the rather impious than pious fraud, which is ingrained in the nature of the Jews. And, curiously enough, a few lines before this tirade, on the very same page, he mentions the fictitious drama Clytemnestra, as

<sup>1</sup> *Græcæ Tragædiæ principum . . . num ea quæ supersunt genuina omnia sint, &c.* Heidelberg, 1808, p. 146.



written by a monk, and a few pages after, a Christian interpolation in an alleged letter of Plato.

Now one should think that no work is more calculated to dispel such bias than the books of the Sibylline Oracles. The greater part of them was written by Christians with the deliberate purpose of propagating Christianity by these means. We find that Alexandre endeavours to defend their authors, and that he finds the deception venial, because it was the literary fashion in those days for authors to pass their works off under some old celebrated name; and that the writers of the Sibylline poems never had any direct intention of fraud, but used this form only as the most convenient one for circulating their views among the heathens. One would suppose that Alexandre would mete out equal justice to the Jewish Sibyllists. But no! He gladly seizes an opportunity (p. 352) of falling foul of the Jews generally in a terrible onslaught on the author of the fifth book. That man is to him, if not a Jew, certainly of Jewish extraction, because he displays the true nature of a Jew in his blindly sticking to the Old Testament, in his unconquered faithfulness to his country and his religion, which is rather fanatical attachment than sincere piety. He shows nothing of that sanctity which pervades the other books. *He* cannot have the advantage of the excuse of pious fraud. He either wrote from hatred to the Romans, or in order to get money from Jews and Judaising Christians for his praises of the Jews and his merciless invective against the Romans. I

fear the fate of Balaam overtook the learned Alexandre when he was writing these words. Even whilst writing, his intended condemnation, against his will, turned for the most part into a warm eulogy. It is worth noticing how blind fanaticism and mercenary motives, two very incongruous incentives indeed, are described here as acting on the same persons at the same time. ✓

Quite a new theory was started by Frankel. He sees in the Jewish Oracles, and in some other supposititious books written by Jews, an Alexandrian Hagada, which was totally different from the Hagada of Palestine. These poems were, according to Frankel, never intended for heathen, but exclusively for Jewish readers. This theory is, in my opinion, untenable. The rigorous exclusion of all ritualistic and all specially national biblical precepts from these poems, shows clearly that they at least were intended to be read by non-Jews. Their authors, inspired by their faith in the glorious future of Israel, imbued with its sublime teachings, but tinged at the same time with the philosophical ideas of their age, and struck with the grandeur and beauty of the literature of Hellas, wished to bring these various elements into harmony, and to place the results before the eyes of the Gentiles with the most fascinating art at their command. They found that the system of writing books under borrowed names was almost openly practised, and they lacked the moral power of rising above the spirit of their age and their surroundings. They are certainly neither more nor less guilty than a host of other writers of their own time and of

subsequent ages ; but however venial their mode of proceeding may be, it can never be fully justified before the forum of truth and religion. Ewald holds that the use of the Sibyl was a poetical licence similar to the invocation of the Muses by a modern poet, with this difference, that a poet calling on the Muses may relate that which they inspire him with in their name ; but that a Sibyl, according to the accepted usage, was always to speak of herself. Granted even this most lenient view of the matter, it ill accords with that veneration of the Holy Scriptures which we should expect from a Jewish scholar of those days for him to assume, under whatever pretext, the title of a prophet, and to pass off his composition as the word of God revealed to him. However much we may try to excuse these Jewish Sibyllists, it cannot be denied that they have cast a slur on the fair fame of the Jewish sages. The learned Fabricius<sup>1</sup> is of opinion that none of the oracles were composed by Jews, that all of them were written by Christians. And what are the arguments he bases his opinion on ? Let us hear his words. “Jews,” he said, “never used to spread false prophecies among the heathens, but were in this respect most religiously careful ; and while they were possessed of the true and divine prophets at home, they were solicitous neither to add anything to them nor to take anything from them. There is scarce any mention made of, and never any value put upon, the Sibylline books by the Jews. Josephus does, indeed, by the way, men-

<sup>1</sup> *Bibliotheca Græca*, I. 1, 133.

tion them, but that only once; Philo not once. Nor, that I can possibly learn, have the Talmudic writers any regard for them. We never read that the heathens brought against the Jews the charge that they forged or interpolated the Sibylline verses, though we do read such an accusation against Christians." I wish I were able to conclude my essay with these words of Fabricius, who, in his estimation of the Jewish sages of old, is, on the whole, so correct. But I cannot do this. Confronted by the practices of these Egyptian Sibyllists I am obliged to gainsay Fabricius, and that it should be so is a circumstance which I cannot but call highly deplorable.

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## SOME LITERARY TRIFLES

(Read before the Jews' College Literary Society, London,  
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It sometimes happens to every one that the mind is in a state between sleep and vigilance. Then our thoughts run their own course; they are not marshalled into methodical grooves by the directing influence of our will, and are yet devoid of that admixture of absurdity and grotesqueness that accompany real dreams. The association of one idea with the other is of the slightest; the most divergent topics are taken up and dropped again to make room for the next that may happen to strike our fancy, without any more than an imaginary connection linking them together. Then there is no limit to the range of dissolving views that chase each other before the mind's eye; past experiences, expectations, questions of practical life, subjects of study, facts, and fancies roll and turn in the turmoil of an uncontrolled mental agitation, half imaginative and half intellectual. Sometimes the tumult is not quite so riotous; the ideas, it is true, gambol freely and tumble over one another, but they confine themselves to one particular range of topics, within which they play their antics, without, however, going outside the ring drawn round them.

It is such a succession of vagaries which I propose to put before you. Experiencing once such a state of semi-somnolence, my riotous ideas were good enough to confine their game to literary points only, and to such as had some connection with matters Jewish. Thankful for their considerateness, I resolved to snapshot them, and I now reproduce them in all their littleness and their unmethodical dissoluteness.

I do not know what it was that turned my mind to Charles Dickens, but I discovered myself wondering whether that great novelist had ever studied the Rambam. No need to tell you that the word "Rambam" represents the initials of the four words "Rabbi Moses ben Maimun," and denotes the great Jewish sage commonly known as Maimonides. But we frequently denote by the expression "studying the Rambam," the study of the great religious code of his, to which he had given the title of the *Yad Hachazaka*, "The Strong Hand"; and which he had also called the *Mishne Torah*, "The Deuteronomy." Now, of course, nobody would imagine such a thing as Dickens studying the Rambam, but the association which connected these two names in my mind was this.

One of the principal characters in *Oliver Twist* is Fagin. This English gentleman of the Jewish persuasion—Dickens himself calls him all along "the Jew"—is not a very amiable personage, and in the end his moral and social aberrations bring upon him a sentence of death. Whilst awaiting his punishment he does not soften his heart, but, if possible,



hardens it still more against every gentle feeling. His frame of mind is shocking. Dickens, in describing it, says: "At one time he raved and blasphemed; and at another howled and tore his hair. Venerable men of his own persuasion had come to pray beside him, but 'he had driven them away with curses.' They renewed their charitable efforts, and 'he beat them off.'"

It is this passage which reminded me so strongly of a passage in Maimonides' work, *The Strong Hand*. It is said there that any one who sees his neighbour committing a sin or walking in a way which is not good is in duty bound to reprove him, and to try to bring him to a better frame of mind; for it is said: "Thou shalt reprove thy neighbour." It must be done as privately and gently as possible. Should such reproof be found without effect, a second and third effort must be made; in fact, the attempts must be continued till the sinner finally refuses to listen to him who reproves him, and "beats him off." Other Jewish authorities say that the efforts must be continued till the well-meaning mentor is "driven away by curses." Both the one and the other opinion is based upon precepts contained in the Talmud.

Now I cannot help thinking that Dickens's description of Fagin cursing the venerable men that came to pray with him, and on a renewal of their efforts beating them off, is no mere coincidence.

Dickens was a careful and painstaking author, and I do not

doubt but that, before penning that horrible scene, he consulted some Jew, learned in the Law, and asked him what the Jews would do were a case like that of Fagin brought before them, and that thus he must have learned that the Law prescribes that attempts to arouse in a criminal a feeling of penitence must be repeated even unto curses and blows on the part of the sinner.

But even if Dickens had quoted Maimonides by name, it would not have been so very strange. There are other instances of novelists citing Rabbinical books. Thus Mrs. Augusta Evans Wilson, in her well-known novel entitled *At the Mercy of Tiberius*, quotes the Mechilta, an ancient Rabbinical exposition of the Book of Exodus. I am not going to pass judgment on this much-read romance; some people like it very much, others find it only passable. It certainly has one great defect, the book is much too learned. When the celebrated Lessing was quite young, he wrote once to his sister that the best wish he could send her on the New Year was that she might be robbed of all her money, because that would be of the greatest benefit to her. In the same way, if the authoress of *At the Mercy of Tiberius* had been robbed of her learning before writing the novel, it would have been to the great advantage of the book. It contains a murder trial, and the speech of the counsel for the defence is given in full. I wonder what an English judge and jury would have said to such an harangue. The counsel commences by addressing the jury as follows: "To the same

astute and unchanging race, whose relentless code of jurisprudence demanded an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life, we owe the instructive picture of cautious inquiry, of tender solicitude for the inviolability of human life, that glows in immortal lustre on the pages of the Mechilta of the Talmud. In the trial of a Hebrew criminal there were 'Lactees' consisting of two men, one of whom stood at the door of the court, with a red flag in his hand, and the other sat on a white horse at some distance on the road to execution. Each of these men cried aloud continually the name of the suspected criminal, of the witnesses, and his crime; and vehemently called upon any person who knew anything in his favour to come forward and testify. Have we, supercilious braggarts of this age of progress, attained to the prudent wisdom of Sanhedrim?"

This pompous tirade has certainly a substratum of historical truth; it is incorrectly quoted, some details are wrongfully added, the demand of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life is far from being so "relentless" in the Rabbinical "code of jurisprudence" as the authoress imagines. But what of that? Readers when taking up a novel of the kind expect a sort of entertainment which is quite different from exact instruction on the details of Rabbinical penal procedure. It has no connection with the rest of the book, and is, so to say, dragged in by violence.

Quite different are the references to Jews and Judaism in a book like *Daniel Deronda*. In that work certain conditions

of Jewish life constitute a considerable part of the plot. To inquire into their value would be an agreeable and useful task, and would not be by any means a trifle. But my mind being bent on trifles I did not think of that, but it was Mr. Klesmer that kept dangling before my mental vision. Herr Klesmer is described as one of those virtuosos before whom every human interest sinks into insignificance compared with musical art. He belongs to several nations, and to no nation. He is "a felicitous combination of the German, the Slave, and the Semite, with grand features, brown hair floating in artistic fashion, and brown eyes in spectacles. . . . He can hardly tolerate anything the English do in music." A lady asking him for his opinion about her performance, receives the reply, that she had not been well taught, for, as George Eliot says, "Woman was dear to him, but music was dearer." "He had an imperious magic in his fingers that seemed to send a nerve-thrill through ivory key and wooden hammer, and compel the strings to make a quivering, lingering speech for him." The novelist describes Herr Klesmer's entrance into an assembly of ordinary well-bred Englishmen, "his mane of hair floating backward in massive inconsistency with the chimney-pot hat, which had the look of having been put on for a joke above his pronounced but well-modelled features and powerful clean-shaven mouth and chin; his tall figure clad in a way which, not being strictly English, was all the more {strange for its apparent emphasis of intention. Draped in a loose garment with a Florentine

beretta on his head, he would have been fit to stand by the side of Leonardo da Vinci; but how when he presented himself in trousers which were not what English feeling demanded about the knees?—and when the fire that showed itself in his glances and the movements of his head, as he looked round him with curiosity, was turned into comedy by a hat which ruled that mankind should have well-cropped hair and a staid demeanour?"

Herr Klesmer's ideas of that which constitutes musical art are equally transcendental. "A creative artist is no more a mere musician than a great statesman is a mere politician."—"The life of the true artist is out of the reach of any but choice organisations—natures framed to love perfection and to labour for it; ready, like all true lovers, to endure, to wait, to say, I am not worthy, but she—Art, my mistress—is worthy, and I will live with her."

Now this incarnation of the genius of music, this Apollo of Belgravia, this Orpheus descended to the fogs of London, why did George Eliot give him the name of Klesmer? How did she come by the word? She must have picked it up in some place in London where Polish Jews live, for the word "Klesmer" is the Yiddish for "musician." Her description of Ezra Cohen, of his family and his mode of living, shows clearly that George Eliot must have made excursions into those quarters of London city in which Polish Jews are wont to congregate. On some such expedition in quest of models for her Jewish pictures, she must have come across the word Klesmer, and not the word only, but

that which it represented, and she named her hero of musical art by that name. For the Klesmer used to play, and still plays in some countries in Eastern Europe, an important part in Jewish life. The word is a curious compound, and, if translated literally, means "instruments of music." As to the Mexicans, when they saw a European on horseback for the first time man and horse appeared to be one, so to the popular Jewish mind the musician and his instrument was one, and the performers were called כלי זמר, musical instruments. In some parts the grammatical vagary went even still farther, and they were called Kle-Semorim, reminding one of the "Cherubims" of the old English Bibles. I read once in German a description of such Klesmer, or Klesmorim, which is interesting for its truthful delineation of the importance of the Klesmer. It runs thus: "The 'musical instruments,' Kle-Semorim, are a portion of Jewish poetical life. They wander about with the fiddle from year's beginning to year's end, knocking at the doors of their brethren, and give him a word in music—his holy tunes. Oh, that holy Jewish music! It is more than the Alphornreigen to the Swiss mountaineer—it reminds one of so many countries; it reminds one of Zion, of Greece, of Rome, of Spain, of Provence, of Italy, of Poland, and of many, many times—that music contains something of everything, but transcribed into Jewish tunes;—at the same time weeping and laughing, exulting and moaning; and how often does it happen that wild jubilation breaks forth from the shrillest cry of anguish, or a cry of anguish from the midst of



joyful jubilation. These living instruments go from door to door all the year round. When the children stand round the lights of the Chanuka lamp, and sing the song Moöuz Tsur Yeshouösee, they suddenly hear two fiddles and a flute accompanying their song, so clearly and sorrowfully—joyfully and sadly—warbling and trembling, as such Jewish songs are wont to be sung. And then gradually other Jewish songs have their turn, and are played—the Kol Nidre, the Avoudah, the Sefira Yotzer, Purim songs, and all such pieces, which our Troubadours, the Klesmer—for it is they who have entered so quietly with their wonderful evening greeting—bring with them of new and old—ever so old tunes.”

This striking picture of our Klesmer appeared many years ago in an anonymous article, but I have every reason to believe that it issued from the pen of Emanuel Deutsch.

But these ambulant performances are not the only duties of the Klesmer. One of their principal functions is that of assisting at weddings. Then it is not only the two fiddles and a flute that officiate, but there is a whole orchestra in proper trim presided over by their bandmaster. The duties of that ruling spirit, the bandmaster, are of a peculiar nature. His functions are complicated, and, strange to say, need not include that of being a musical instrument himself. He is termed “Badchan,” or also “the Marshallik”; he directs what pieces are to be performed, and to what tunes his own humoristic compositions must be recited. He is *par excellence* the provider of jokes, the

professional jester. This is sufficiently indicated by the appellation of "Marshallik," which is a popular corruption of the German "Schalk," and of "Badchan," which is from a Rabbini-cal root and denotes jester. In some parts of Russia and Poland it used to be, and is perhaps still, as impossible to have a wedding without a Badchan as without a bridegroom and bride. Whilst the wedding guests are dining, or dancing, or diverting themselves in some other way, the Badchan holds forth his jokes, his comic and his earnest songs, he carries on with great gravity a mock argumentation on some ridiculous question. It is not surprising that in many cases the jokes turn out to be rather broad, and the songs just verging upon the undesirable. But though that is not surprising, it is surprising that there are occasionally found among these Badchonim real poets, who know how to blend jest with earnest, and understand how to impressively weave into their songs the pathos of Israel's sufferings and Israel's joys. Some of these poems exist in print, but they are little known, clad as they are in their unconventional garb of Yiddish.

But it is not only as the master of a band of Klesmer and of the professional jester that the Badchan or Marshallik comes to the front. On certain occasions one of his functions is to officiate as preacher. In some districts at every wedding it is his task "zu strofen die Kalle," to impress the bride with the solemnity of the hour. A chair is placed in the middle of the room, on which the bride is seated, her head and face covered with a veil.

The wedding guests sit round her in a circle, and the Badchan steps forward, and, in an impressive voice and tone, addresses the bride, and reminds her of her days of youth that are passed and her duties for the future, of the importance of married life, of those of her departed relatives to whom she had been particularly dear. Here again the surprising thing is that some of these Badchonim rise sometimes to remarkable eloquence and display a depth of feeling which sinks deep into the hearts of their audience.

This combination of the functions of jester and preacher reminds us of a question which was once put to Lessing, whether a preacher should be allowed to write comedies; to which Lessing answered, "Why not, if he can?" Again he was asked, whether a writer of comedies was allowed to write sermons; to which he answered, "Why not, if he likes." So that, if anybody should object to the union of the functions of preacher and president of an orchestra of Klesmer, do not let him quote the authority of Lessing.

But whether George Elliot's Herr Klesmer owes his patronymic to the circumstance alluded to or not, there is another Jewish trait in the same novel which is rather puzzling. It is the passage in which Deronda's visit to a synagogue in Frankfurt-on-the-Main is described. It was on a Friday evening that "he happened to take his seat in a line with an elderly man—his ordinary clothes, as well as the *talith* or white blue-fringed kind of blanket, which is the garment of prayer, very much

worn." He attracted Deronda's notice, and returned it, till at last their eyes met. Deronda immediately felt a prayer-book pushed towards him. Meanwhile "the white thaliths had mustered, the reader had mounted the *Almemor* or platform, and the service began. Deronda, having looked enough at the German translation of the Hebrew in the book before him to know that he was chiefly hearing Psalms and Old Testament passages or phrases, gave himself up to that strongest effect of chanted liturgies which is independent of detailed verbal meaning; . . . but this evening all were one for Deronda; the chant of the *Chazan's* or Reader's grand wide-ranging voice, with its passage from monotony to sudden cries, the outburst of sweet boys' voices from the little choir, the devotional swaying of men's bodies backwards and forwards, the very commonness of the building and shabbiness of the scene." . . .

Now, George Eliot, we have every reason to assume, wanted to give here a picture drawn from life; how is it then that, in describing an ordinary Friday evening service, she makes the men wearing the *talith*, and describes the prayers as consisting chiefly of Psalms and Old Testament passages? There can only be one explanation. Something untoward had happened to George Eliot. She was determined to witness a Friday evening service in a synagogue, and it so happened that she chose a Friday evening which was, at the same time, the evening of *Yom Kippur*, of the Day of Atonement. This is the only occasion when the *talith* is worn on a Friday evening. Somebody

must have pushed a Machzor of Yom Kippur into her hands, which she opened at random, and the contents of which she believed to be the ordinary Friday evening service. That this is the correct explanation is evident from the further description of the liturgy, for she proceeds: "The whole scene was a coherent strain, its burthen a passionate regret, which, if he had known the liturgy for the Day of Reconciliation, he might have clad in its antithetic burthen: 'Happy the eye which saw all these things, but verily to hear only of them afflicts the soul. Happy the eye that saw our temple and the joy of our congregation, but verily to hear only of them afflicts our soul. Happy the eye that saw the fingers when tuning every kind of song, but verily to hear only of them afflicts our soul,' " &c.

This passage shows that George Eliot was somehow aware that something was wrong in her description, and that she mixed up the service of Yom Kippur with that of an ordinary Friday evening.

Thinking of impressions experienced in the synagogue on a Friday evening, I wondered how the Portuguese Jews of the Bevis Marks Synagogue might have been impressed by their chazan on the Friday evenings of the years 1775 and 1776. It was on the Friday evening that their chazan Leoni had his evening off from the theatre where he was one of the actors in Sheridan's play, the *Duenna*. We are able to form some notion as to the sort of voice he had, for, in a letter reproduced by Thomas Moore in his *Life of Sheridan*, we find that this author



wrote to Linley: "I think I heard you say you never heard Leoni, and I cannot briefly explain to you the character and situation of the persons on the stage with him. The first, a dialogue between Quick and Mrs. Mattocks (who played Isaac and Donna Louisa), I would wish to be a pert, sprightly air; for though some of the words mayn't seem suited to it, I should mention that they are neither of them in earnest in what they say. Leoni takes it up seriously, and I want him to show himself advantageously in the six lines, beginning 'Gentle maid.' I should tell you that he sings nothing well but in a plaintive or pastoral style; and his voice is such as appears to me always to be hurt by much accompaniment. I have observed, too, that he never gets so much applause as when he makes a cadence. Therefore my idea is, that he should make a flourish at 'Shall I grieve thee?' and return to 'Gentle maid,' and so sing that part of the tune again."

"The run of the opera," says Moore, "had no parallel in the annals of the drama." The *Duenna* was acted no less than seventy-five times during the season, the only intermissions being a few days at Christmas, and the Friday in every week—the latter on account of Leoni, who, being a Jew, could not act on those nights."

Leoni's part in the opera was that of Don Carlos. "Carlos was originally meant to be a Jew, and is called 'Cousin Moses' in the first sketch of the dialogue." But Moses was changed into Carlos, as Moore thinks, from the consideration that the



former would apply too personally to Leoni, who was to perform the character. I do not think many particulars are known of the life of this chazan-opera singer. I believe he left England, and took up his abode in Jamaica, where, as far as I could discover, nothing further was heard of him.

The impression which the Friday evening service in the synagogue at Frankfort-on-the-Main made upon Daniel Deronda was quite different from that which it made about three hundred years ago upon another Englishman who visited the synagogue in the same city. Hugh Broughton was a renowned Protestant theologian who lived 1549-1612. He was not only a good Hebrew scholar, but he was also acquainted with many Rabbinical works in the original. He occupied a great portion of his life in theological disputes, and was of a bitter, rancorous disposition. Joseph Scaliger called him "*furiosus et maledicus*," of a fiery temper and a sharp tongue. Scaliger himself was not sweet-mouthed by any means in his controversies, and Broughton's invective must have been rather acute to appear remarkable to a man like Scaliger. Broughton travelled much in Holland and Germany, and had frequent disputes with Rabbis, whom he wished to convert to Christianity. On one occasion he visited the synagogue at Frankfort-on-the-Main on a Friday or a Festival evening, and on leaving, an acquaintance asked him, "Did not our Reader sing like an angel?" "No," snarled Broughton, "he barked like a dog." This may serve as an instance of Broughton's suavity and kindness of disposition.

Daniel Deronda was differently impressed—the man who had been brought up as a Christian, and discovered in the end that he was really a Jew.

There is another English novel which deals pre-eminently with Jewish characters, the plot of which is based upon a Christian having been brought up as a Jew, who discovered in the end that he was really a Christian. The novel is entitled *The Limb*, and was written by an anonymous author, who describes himself on the title-page as X. L. It was in 1896 that Dr. Theodor Herzl published his pamphlet *Der Judenstaat*. This was subsequently translated into English, and Sir Samuel Montagu sent a copy of that translation to Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Gladstone sent a reply, in which he said: "The subject of your inclosure is most interesting: not easy for an outsider to form an opinion on; impertinent, perhaps, to speak were it formed. I am surprised, however, to see the misery of the Jews so broadly stated. Of course, I am strongly *anti-anti-Semitism*. In a singular and rather striking novel called *The Limb*, you would find some rather exceptional handling."

It is superfluous to say that the adjectives applied by Mr. Gladstone to that novel are remarkably correct. The novel *The Limb* is singular and striking, and the handling of the Jewish features, which form a great portion of the book, is exceptional. But there is no real connection between the book and Dr. Herzl's pamphlet, except that in both religious

persecution is accentuated. But on this point also the greatest discrepancy prevails. Nor is there any likeness between *The Limb* and *Daniel Deronda*, however much both are occupied with Jewish topics. It is strange that *The Limb* is not more widely known among the Jewish novel-reading public. It is greatly above the standard of everyday novels. The method of religious persecution, as practised in Russia, is described in a realistic manner. But in the description of Jews and Judaism there is this difference between George Eliot and X. L., that in *Daniel Deronda* both the descriptions of Jewish persons and of Jewish customs are, in the main, portraits, they are not the fruits of mere book-learning or creative fiction, whilst in *The Limb* the Jewish customs are mostly the result of book-learning, and the Jewish characters the outcome of creative imagination, both being only scantily aided by portraiture.

The town whence hail the Jews depicted in *The Limb* is described by the author himself as an extraordinary place. "A small town," says the author, "in White Russia. No one who has only seen the Jews as they are in Petersburg and Moscow can have any idea of what this extraordinary people really are like. At S., far away from any railway station, and indeed not near any navigable part of the Dwina, the appearance of this Hebrew settlement was as extraordinary as anything you can imagine." The same is said of the Jews of that town, who are with one exception almost the only Jews

that play a part in the narrative. They are depicted as "half-crazed fanatics and semi-barbarians." They are "not orthodox Jews, but ignorant fanatics, strongly tainted with Chassidism." The Rabbi of the place was "a half-mad mystic," and his congregants are also "mad fanatics, and really most unorthodox Jews." We see that the Jews of that place are Jews of imagination, and not of experience. They are painted with screaming exaggeration of colour. The same extravagant grotesqueness adheres to the two principal characters of the book. Faivel Ravouna is grotesquely wicked, Michael or Michka is grotesquely divine. Faivel was a "Jew such as you see in London, Paris, or Vienna, or Petersburg; he was very rich; he was a scoffer, unbeliever, cynic, sceptic." He did not hesitate, whenever it suited his purposes, to conform to the most extraordinary rites of the congregation at S. He lived only for his revenge. He obtained a child, the son of Lotta Czapak, a Roumanian, and a gipsy musician. He names him Michael, and for purposes of his own brings him up as a Jew. Michael, or Michka, thought that he was Faivel's nephew. The boy was educated in the strictest Jewish fashion by the Rabbi and the Melammed. He was handed by Faivel to the care of some powerful Christian protectors for the purpose of undergoing a thorough musical training abroad, on the understanding that no attempt of any kind should be made to convert the boy to Christianity, or to induce him to alter his religious views in any way. He came to Paris, studied music, and some Jewish

friends took care of him, and saw that nothing was omitted which the most religious training of a Jew might require. His progress was extraordinary. Michka Ravouna and Herr Klesmer have this in common, that in both the genius of musical art is incarnated in its absolute purity. But whilst in Herr Klesmer everything is robust, massive, primordially vigorous, in Michka Ravouna everything is divinely gentle, womanly tender, delicate, and spiritual. He is called by all who heard him sing the angel-singer, the women say that they see his soul while he is singing, he has the face, and the voice, and the spirit of an angel.

In the details of the book the author seizes upon every opportunity to air his knowledge of things Jewish. He says that Michka was never without his Arba Kanfoth or talith Katan, although he wore no peoth. He was careful not to wear Shaätnez, and his food was prepared in a special way, and a double set of kitchen utensils and vessels for the table was kept for him. He is called an ascetic young Talmid-Chacham. The author must have spent a good deal of time over reading up such references about Jewish laws and usages as were accessible to him. The lack of original, first-hand knowledge displays itself frequently. He says, that the members of the Kahal consisted of twelve daions, who were leading citizens, being opulent merchants. They strictly kept the law of Sabbath, and as an example, the author says that they "devoutly refrained from walking more than 2000 steps



from their houses on the Sabbath, or, if they did so, they were careful to bury in the ground on the very two thousandth step a fragment, or a crumb, of their household bread, which, according to usage, establishing as it did their house, enabled them without sin to walk yet another 2000 steps from the spot where the crumb lay buried." Those who know anything of the precepts about the "Sabbath boundary" see at a glance how matters become distorted and transformed into caricature when second-hand book-learning is taken in, but not digested. The author speaks of the school of Shammai, the school of Hillel, of commentaries on commentaries, which fill the 2500 printed pages of the Halacha, of the Agada, *and* of the Gemara, of the book of Zohar, of Shiur Koma, Ozar Hakabod, Toledoth Adam, Sefer Jezira, Kaarat Kezef, and of the Kabbala, or Chochma Nistar (*sic*). He quotes Rashi's interpretation on Hillel's saying about the Messiah, reproduces scraps from Maimonides, and has some knowledge of the Jewish prayer-book, certain pieces of which he makes Michka recite, all the while interspersing remarks so as to point out the superiority of the Christian over the Jewish religion. This latter feature makes the denouement all the more striking; it is ghastly, yet eminently artistic, and I shall not tell you what it comes to, because I hope that those of you who have not read the book will yet do so.

The author's remark that Faivel Ravouna "did not dress like a Jew" caused my wandering mind to fly off at a tangent,



and I all at once thought of a passage in a modern novel, to which Mr. Israel Abrahams had once drawn my attention, which refers to clothes bought from a Jew. If students want fresh news about the presence of Jews in England during the period between their expulsion and their readmission, the novelists provide them with such ; for instance, Scott in *Kenilworth* proves right enough that there were Jews in England in Elizabeth's reign. But a new and rather popular romance of the Civil War, by Edward Pickering, *The Dogs of War*, introduces us to pedlars selling clothes outside Bristol about 1648! "I had a thought that you would fall into some trouble, and having got this dress from a Jew pedlar fellow, which for plain discomfort is the worst ever devised, I left the camp." This anachronism made me think of another imaginary case of a person having got into trouble, not indeed by buying clothes from a Jew, but by looking at Jewish clothes. I allude to the second letter in the first book of the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*. I have given elsewhere a description of that book, and it suffices now to mention that it is a satirical production, in which the opponents of the celebrated Johann Reuchlin are mercilessly pilloried and scourged, and that it is written in the dog-Latin of the monks of the day, which gives the pictures a character of undescribable comicality. The impression these letters produced in Germany was electric. Even the scruples of the more sober friends of Reuchlin had to struggle with the inclination to smile, but soon laughter

gained the day and drove every other emotion before it. It is said that Erasmus of Rotterdam, while suffering from an affection of the throat, laughed so much at one of these letters that the abscess in his throat opened, and he was cured. Heinrich Heine alludes to the letters and their effect:—

Der Erasmus musste lachen  
So gewaltig ob dem Spass,  
Dass ihm platzte in dem Rachen  
Sein Geschwür, und er genas.  
Auf der Ebersburg desgleichen  
Lachte Sickingen wie toll,  
Und in allen deutschen Reichen  
Das Gelächter wiederscholl.  
Alte lachten wie die Jungen,  
Eine einzige Lache nur  
War ganz Wittenberg. Sie sangen  
"Gaudeamus igitur."

Heinrich Heine proceeds in a style so peculiarly Heineian that you must excuse me from quoting it. In the letter I allude to, one Joannes Pellifex professes to be greatly agitated in his mind at an act of sacrilege which he had committed. He says: "Once I was walking with a friend in Frankfort-on-the-Main when I saw two respectable-looking men in black tunics, hoods, and scapularies (*et habuerunt nigras tunicas, et magna caputia cum liripipiis*). I took them for *magistri nostri*, and took my cap off to them. My friend exclaimed: 'Gracious, what have you done? These people are Jews, and you take your cap off to them!' I never was so frightened in my life

(tunc ego ita fui perterritus, ut si vidissem unum diabolum). 'Do you think,' I asked, 'that I have committed a great sin? I did it in ignorance.' My friend said that he considered it a mortal sin, equivalent to idolatry; it was a violation of the commandment, 'believe in one God.' But I remonstrated that I did it in ignorance: 'I admit, had I done it knowing that they were Jews, I should fully deserve to be burnt alive, for then it would have been heresy; but I swear and protest, I really believed they were Magistri.'" But his friend gave him only cold comfort. He said that there was only one thing to be done to save his conscience, and that was, to make a confession in the proper quarter. His plea of ignorance was all nonsense; do not all Jews wear a yellow badge? "I noticed it, why didn't you?" The sinner is in a great perturbation of mind. "Pray," he writes, "tell me how I am to solve the question; let me know whether my case is a simple case, or an episcopal case, or a case for the Pope himself. I ask you, is it right of the authorities in Frankfort to allow Jews to walk about in the same garb as *magistri nostri*? I consider it a shocking scandal; it simply makes a laughing-stock of holy theology (*mihi videtur quod non est rectum et est magnum scandalum, etiam est una derisio sacrosanctae theologiae*)."

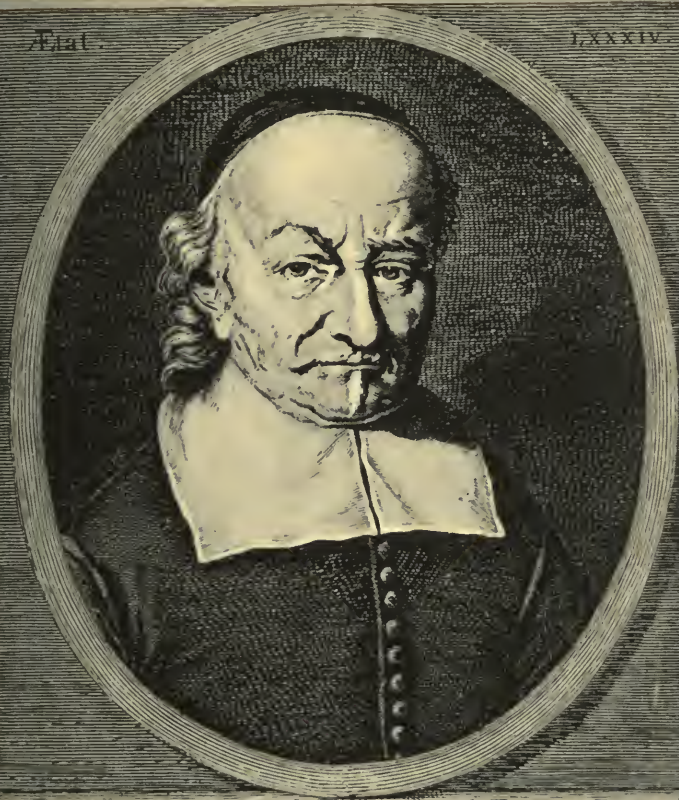
Thinking of Reuchlin and his opponents, I wondered whether those who objected to innovations in Christian doctrine attached any sacredness to the sum of a thousand

ducats. Reuchlin's opponents did not understand how it was possible for a good Christian—not only to defend the Jews—but to refuse joining the hue and cry that was being raised against the Jews and their books by Johann Pfefferkorn and his abettors. They therefore invented the tale that Reuchlin had received from the Jews a bribe of a thousand ducats. It so happens that the Jews of Frankfort were at that time penniless, and, when they wanted money to defend themselves against Pfefferkorn's machinations, they were obliged to borrow some at two hundred per cent. About 270 years later, a tale of a bribe of a thousand ducats from the Jews again made its appearance. It was after Lessing had published some fragments from a work by the physician Reimarus, and known as the *Wolfenbüttel* fragments. Their incisive critique of certain tenets of the Christian doctrine scandalised several people, and it was Pastor Göze of Hamburg who opened a campaign against Lessing. To use a homely phrase, Pastor Göze caught a Tartar. The controversy between Lessing and Göze is one of the most memorable specimens of controversial literature, and will not cease to attract notice as long as literature shall exist. Then some low-minded people invented the absurd fable that Lessing had accepted from the Jewish community in Amsterdam the sum of a thousand ducats as a fee for his attacking the Christian Church by means of the publication of the *Wolfenbüttel* fragments. The libel was published at the time, but it was so stupid on the

face of it, that 'nobody, not even Lessing's opponents, took it up.

Thinking of Amsterdam, an amusing skit occurred to me, in derision of the elder Jacob Triglandus. The religious world was at his time greatly agitated. The disputes for and against Calvin's doctrines ran high, and in Holland the quarrels between Gomarists and Arminians, or between Remonstrants and Contra-Remonstrants, derived additional virulence from the political animosities that were mixed up with the theological discord. The synod of Dordrecht became a powerful body; it was the bulwark of those who were opposed to Arminianism, and it was presided over by Jacob Triglandus, who, although a Roman Catholic by birth, became afterwards a fervent defender of the doctrines of Calvin. The opponents spared neither him nor his synod. All sorts of lampoons were launched against them. Triglandus is described as having a violent temper, and he obtained the nickname of "de kalkoensche haan," the Turkey-cock. The Remonstrants accused him as being the most intolerant person under the sun. One of the lampoons written against him is ascribed to the great Dutch poet Vondel, who was so closely followed by Milton in some passages of the *Paradise Lost*, in *Samson Agonistes*, and elsewhere. Vondel was very violent in his outbursts against the Contra-Remonstrants, against Triglandus, and the synod of Dordrecht. Vondel says that the Turkey-cock looks very red, because he drinks so much wine, and carries all the contents of the wine-





De grze VONDEL, die door treurstyl, heldentoon,  
Door hier-en heekelacht, met d'oudheit om de kroon  
Des lauxers streeft, voor wien nul Neerduitsch schryft moet zwichten,  
Vertoont zich in dees print, maar leeft in zyn gedichten.





cask of Heidelberg in his nose. He is above all things afraid of being considered tolerant in matters religious. Once when beating his wife the servant asked him, "Don't you know that the Mistress is not right in her head?" "Hold your tongue," answered Triglandus, "I do it so as not to be suspected of tolerance."

Hoort gy Heeren, hoort, ik laet u weten  
't kalkoensche Haentjen heeft zyn wijf gesmeten ;  
En zyn Meit, die wat snar in de bek is,  
Zey, Meester, weetje wel dat onze vrou gek is ?  
Swyg, zeide hy, ik volg myn ordonantie,  
Om niet suspekt te zyn van tolerantie.

Most probably not a particle of truth underlies this pasquinade. At that time Vondel was passionately defending Arminianism, and continued doing so till in his old age he turned Roman Catholic, when he commenced as passionately to defend his new persuasion.

The younger Triglandus was one of the scholars who gave a mighty impetus to the study of Hebrew. This Triglandus was a great scholar ; he wrote several theological works in which he displayed a knowledge of Rabbinical literature, and his inquiring mind led him even to enter into a correspondence with Karaïtes. It may be said that it was in Holland that comparative Semitic philology was promulgated, after Reuchlin had introduced into Christian Europe the study of Hebrew. There is in English a biography of Reuchlin by Francis Barham. On the title-page the author calls Reuchlin the father of the

Reformation. He cannot be properly called this, much less can he be called the originator of modern Bible critique, in which character he is represented by Froude in his life of Erasmus.

*À propos* of Barham's book, the author has made one of those curious little blunders which are not at all rare among such non-Jewish authors as receive their information of things Jewish at second-hand. The mistake made by the Capucin friar, Henricus Seynensis, is well known. He thought that the Talmud was not a book, but a man, and he speaks of Rabbi Talmud, "ut narrat Rabbinus Talmud." Now Rabbi David Kimchi wrote a Hebrew grammar to which he gave the title "Michlol," Compendium, and Barham turns Rabbi David Kimchi into Rabbi Kimchi Michlol, Rabbi Kimchi Compendium.

A very amiable gentleman, who, I am happy to say, is still among the living, Dr. John Henry Bridges, fell once into a similar error. Dr. Bridges has written several works; he has written about the Positivist philosophy, and translated into English some of the works of Auguste Comte. He has also edited Roger Bacon's *Opius Maius*, which edition some critics consider far from being a success. As far back as 1857 he wrote an article, "The Jews of Europe in the Middle Ages." It was published in the *Oxford Essays* of that year. It is a well-written, sympathetic article, and does great credit to its author. Speaking of the sufferings of the Jews, he has occasion to cite the martyrology, *Shevet Jehudah*, "The Rod of Judah." This title denotes the contents of the book, at the same time

alluding to the name of its author, who was Judah Virga, and would therefore mean also, "The Rod written by Jehudah." Dr. Bridges mixes up the title of the book with the author's name, and quotes him as Schaevet ben Virgae, "The Rod the son of Virga."

Oversights of this kind are common enough, and pardonable enough, even among such authors as endeavour to be accurate. I have, therefore, little patience when some people try to find out the sense of some allusion to things Jewish, which occur in authors who did not care at all whether they said the right thing or not. Thus we find in Horace, in the ninth Satire of the first book, that Aristius Fuscus said: "You do not think of doing any serious work on the thirtieth Sabbath, and thus grievously offending the Jews?" It is asked, what did Horace mean by the "thirtieth Sabbath"? Some said he meant Rosh Chodesh, the "New Moon's day"; others, Rosh Chodesh falling on a Sabbath; others, again, that he meant Passover. As if Horace meant anything at all! what did Romans of the stamp of Horace know about Jews and their usages? They held the Jews in great contempt (they thought generally that the Jews fasted on the Sabbath and that they worshipped in their temple the image of an ass). In citing Horace now, I gave only the gist of the passage, but not a translation; it is much too objectionable a phrase to bear rendering.

Again, the question is asked, Why should Horace, when relating his conversation with Aristius Fuscus, allude to the

Jews at all? Somebody wanted to cut this knot also, by assuming that Aristius Fuscus himself must have been a Jew! But why not make Horace himself a Jew whilst we are about it? Aristius Fuscus a Jew indeed! But then some of our brethren suffer from that malady of seeing a Jew in almost everybody. Thackeray, who was not particularly fond of Jews, broadly caricatures that propensity, and also the inclination for display with which the Jews are charged, in his burlesque *Codlingsby*. We are introduced to the private apartment of Raphael Mendoza. "The carpet was of white velvet—laid over several webs of Aubusson, Ispahan, and Axminster . . . of white velvet, painted with flowers, arabesques, and classic figures by Sir William Ross, Turner, Mrs. Mee, and Paul Delaroche. The edges were wrought with seed-pearls, and fringed with Valenciennes lace and bullion. The walls were hung with cloth of silver, embroidered with gold figures, over which were worked pomegranates, polyanthes, and passion-flowers, in ruby, amethyst, and emerald. The drops of dew which the artificer had sprinkled on the flowers were diamonds. There were divans carved of amber covered with ermine. Miss Mendoza plays on an ivory pianoforte with silver and enamelled keys, and is seated on a mother-of-pearl music-stool. Everybody is a Jew, the composers Rossini, Brahms, Sloman, Weber, are all Jews. Mr. Mendoza explains to his guest that his Majesty (the King of France) is a Jew, so is the Pope of Rome; so is . . .—a whisper concealed the rest."

It is ridiculous to say that Aristius Fuscus was a Jew. If there was a Jew alluded to at all in that Satire, it can only have been the third man mentioned there. In that case Horace caricatures one of that class of Jews of whom we have, unfortunately, a number among us, who want to force their company upon any man of distinction they come in contact with, especially if he is a non-Jew. They come across a high-placed personage, and they try to absorb him, to monopolise him. They try to get introductions to the highest social circles; they will hear, abjectedly patient, any slur cast on their faith and their race, and pretend not to notice it, as long as they are able to conceal, as they imagine, that they are Jews themselves. But at the same time they do not lose sight of their business concerns. Such tendencies are not themselves particularly Jewish, they are found among representatives of all denominations and nationalities, but a Jew displaying them is taken as the type of the whole race. It is just possible that Horace wanted to scourge a Jew of that kind. He says: "I was once walking along the Sacred Way, musing on trifles, when a person known to me only by name came up to me, grasped my hand, and said: 'My dearest friend, how do you do?'—I answered 'Quite well, thank you; and you?'—The man following me, I asked, 'What do you want?' 'Oh,' he said, 'only to make your acquaintance; I am a man of letters.' 'Indeed, I esteem you all the more for it.'"

Horace tried every expedient to get rid of him: he stood



still, he pretended to whisper something to his attendant, he is all in a perspiration. But it is of no use. The man continues talking, Horace does not answer. The man says: "You are in a terrible hurry to get away from me, but I shall stick to you. Where are you going to?"—"I must visit a sick friend who lives a long way off, on the other side of the Tiber; why should you go so far out of your way?"—"Oh! I have nothing to do; I am not tired; I will go with you." The man kept on rattling about his accomplishments in singing, dancing, and poetry.

"Have you a mother living?" Horace asked, "or any relations to whom your life is valuable?"—"No, they are all dead."—How lucky for them, I thought. A fortune-teller once told me that I should not die by poison, or sword, or pleurisy, or cough, or gout, but that a chatterbox would be the death of me.

It was now nine o'clock; they had arrived at the temple of Vesta, and the man, who had a case in court, had to present himself there, or lose his case. "Do me a favour," he asked of Horace; "assist me in my case."

"I? I am not a lawyer; besides, I am due elsewhere."

"Well, what shall I do—leave you, or leave the case?"

"Me, by all means."

"No, I won't."

Horace gave himself up for lost. The man continued chattering; he wanted an introduction to Maecenas. Horace refuses. The man says he would get it for himself. "I will

bribe the servants. If the door is shut in my face, I will persevere. I will watch for opportunities; I will meet him in the streets; I will escort him home."

Just then Aristius Fuscus came along. He knew what sort of man the stranger was. Horace thought relief was near. "I pinched Aristius Fuscus; I caught his arms, nodded my head, rolled my eyes." But Fuscus pretended not to understand. "Didn't you say, Fuscus, you had some private matter to speak to me about?"—"I remember, but I will tell it you at a more proper time. To-day is the thirtieth Sabbath; would you affront the Jews?"—"What do I care," said Horace.—"But I do care. I am somewhat weaker; one of the multitude. You will forgive me; I will tell you another time." Fuscus went away. Horace gave himself up for lost, when the man's party in the lawsuit arrived. "Ho, scoundrel," exclaimed the man, "I arrest you. You, Horace, witness the arrest." Horace consented; both parties shouted, a crowd collected, and Horace was saved.

It is just possible that Fuscus, who enjoyed Horace's discomfiture, is represented to have made that offensive remark about the Jews so as to give a hit to that bore who belonged to that abject class of Jew that gulps down any insults to his race, as long as he can be seen in the company of men of society. On the other hand, the remark about the Jews may have no particular meaning at all. I was pondering whether some Jews of quite a different stamp, men of noble aspirations, who are constantly at pains to show others that we are not so black as we are painted,

were not sometimes too prone to urge their endeavours upon others—I was wondering whether they were wise in doing so. My thoughts took a more serious turn; my semi-somnolence changed into complete somnolence, and I fell fast asleep. This was the ultimate effect of these mutoscopical vagaries of my mind; they sent me to sleep. I shall not be surprised in the least if their description will have the same effect upon you.

## A SURVEY OF JEWISH LITERATURE

(A Paper read before the Jews' College Literary  
Society in November 1902.)

THE Jews' College Literary Society, the new session of which has just been declared open, has the furtherance of Jewish literature for its main object. The term "Jewish literature" is fluent enough in everybody's mouth; yet it is sufficiently vague to require some elucidation, and I propose to make a few observations on some of its aspects and characteristics.

The question arises whether the differences between Jewish literature and any other literature are only incidental; whether the distinction is only the outcome of the accidents of language, soil, and history; or whether it is based upon some internal motive; whether there is any distinct principle, any peculiar ideal, which underlies the dissimilarity; whether Jewish literature is a mere variety, or whether it is a distinct species, among the literatures of the world.

Even a superficial glance will show that the differences between English, French, German, and also Greek and Roman literature, on the one hand, and Jewish literature on the other, do not rest on the mere accidents of language

and country. As for language—it seems a paradox, and yet it is a bewildering truth, that the accident of language is, and at the same time is not, the criterion by which to judge whether a work belongs to Jewish literature.

We expect that the productions of English literature be written in English, and that those of Greek literature be written in Greek. It is, with perhaps a few exceptions, men and women born and bred on British soil that are the bearers of English literature; and the literatures of other nations show similar phenomena; each, of course, in its own way. It is true, an historical description of English literature will have to go back to documents that were written in idioms and dialects, which are as unintelligible to the unlearned Englishman as Persian or Chinese. But these idioms are such as may be called the parents of that which we call nowadays English, and, as a matter of fact, are themselves English. Again, the historian of English literature will have to take account of a number of works that were written in Latin at the time when that language was the only medium of learned intercourse; as, for instance, the works of the Venerable Bede and Alcuin. But it is only by a stretch of imagination that such writings could be said to belong to English literature; not to speak of such artificialities as, for example, Milton's Latin poems and like productions.

But how totally different are the relations of language

and locality to Jewish literature. It is true, the Hebrew language is the mould in which the products of Jewish literature are pre-eminently cast. When our literature was in its infancy, Hebrew served for its swaddling clothes; Hebrew was the garb in which its youth and manhood were clad. At the time of its greatest glory, Hebrew supplied it with its gorgeous and right royal robes. Throughout the ages of exile and suffering, of persecution and degradation, and, equally, when temporary relief or local toleration were vouchsafed us, Hebrew never ceased to be the channel through which the Jew poured forth his expressions of joy and suffering, his prayers and his hopes, his doubts and his convictions. And, in spite of all this, there is hardly any modern or ancient language, or any part of the world on which the light of civilisation has ever shone, in which we do not meet with such fruits of the Jewish mind as are essentially parts of Jewish literature. Take, for example, the theosophical reflections of Philo, who lived in Alexandria, and wrote in Greek; the histories of Josephus, who lived in Rome, and also wrote in Greek; the *Guide of the Perplexed*, written in Arabic by Maimonides, who lived in Cairo; the book *Kuzari*, also written in Arabic by R. Jehuda Halevi, who lived in Spain; the *Conciliador*, written in the Spanish language by Manasseh ben Israel, who lived in Amsterdam; the dialogues on the immortality of the soul, written in German by Moses Mendelssohn in Berlin. How could it be denied



that these writings are essentially products of Jewish literature?

I do not wish to discuss the causes of this strange phenomenon; I only wish to point out that such anomalous results of the anomalous history of the Jewish race although unique, yet do not constitute the intrinsic difference that obtains between Jewish and any other literature. All these circumstances are only incidental, and bear a merely external character.

External and incidental are also the differences observable between the forms in which the stock of Jewish, and that of other literatures are moulded. Even the broad classification into poetry and prose does not apply to Jewish literature in the ordinary way; not to speak of more detailed specifications, such as dramatical, lyrical, and epic poetry. It were futile to call Isaiah an orator in the same sense in which the designation is applied to Demosthenes, or to compare the historical books of the Bible with the histories of Herodotus and Thucydides. Points of divergence of similar nature could be greatly multiplied, but they would not go to the root of the matter.

The real differences lie much deeper. Jewish literature derives its character from the religious ideal which the Jewish race was appointed to promulgate to the world. That factor in the educational course through which the human race has to pass, so as to gain the highest attainable efficiency for the

soul's best endowments, is mirrored on almost every page of such writings as fall within the boundary line of Jewish literature, from its most divine manifestations down to its weakest echoes.

There is no presumption on the part of the Jew in saying this. We Jews have been accused from very early times of being swayed by an unjustifiable pride, by an arrogant sense of superiority over other races. As a matter of fact we were warned at the very threshold of our history to beware of such over-estimation of self. We were told that "God did not delight in us on account of our superiority, for we were the least of all nations," that the task which the sons of Israel were appointed to accomplish was not allotted them because of their own excellence; but that it was for God's inscrutable reasons that the mission was entrusted them. It is not our own superiority, but the divine impress that is stamped upon almost every line of our literary treasures. I will not enter upon a scrutiny of such manifestation from a theological point of view; nor is it necessary. A purely historical consideration of events leads to the same results.

Of the nations that shaped out a course for the human race along which to steer through the ages, there were three that pointed out a direction which proved to be of lasting value, and in which the thoughts and actions of man are being led up to the present day. The highest conception of the Beautiful and its plastic representation was the endow-

ment of the ancient Greeks. Europe's notions about that which is right and wrong in questions of property between man and man are intimately connected with those held by the Roman people; it is that people that gave the world the science of jurisprudence. It is the Jewish people that gave the world its religion. In whatever form, and to whatever lengths, the inquiry may be carried on into the physiology, so to say, of religious beliefs, we shall have to acknowledge in the result that mankind owes to the Jews the most transcendental conceptions about God and religion. It is in Judaism that were fixed the notions about God, as to unity, incorporeality, invisibility, omnipotence, omniscience, infinite mercy; in it God was established as Creator and Providence. Judaism demanded that he, and he only, be recognised, and held out the prospect that the whole earth shall be full of the recognition of him alone "as the water covers the sea."

This divine ideal is the source from which the rivulets have flown which form the broad stream of Jewish literature. Is it necessary for me to say that its most sublime manifestation is the Book of all books, the Hebrew Bible? I do not hesitate to say that all literary products which come truly within the confines of Jewish literature take their issue from that book, and centre round it. It comprises all questions which were ever of the highest interest for the Jewish mind. It stirred into vigorous action the rudimentary mental capacities of primitive generations, who could only conceive abstract

ideas in the form of things palpable and visible. It forbade the worship of the phenomena of nature; it destroyed the gross demonology, and the crude worship of things material. It solves, in its own way, the highest metaphysical problems, those eternally insoluble enigmas of the human mind, if the latter be left to itself, and it is equally distant from a rigid pantheism, from an inconceivable spiritual absolutism, and from a soulless materialism. It satisfies man's undefined spiritual cravings, and responds to his yearning to commune with his God.

And with all this divine sublimity, it appeals irresistibly to the human instincts of man. In reference to man, everything is harmonious. There is no attempt in our Hebrew Bible, either to make the intellect predominant over other psychical forces, or to crush the needs of the body, or our rational thoughts, or the emotions of our heart. In this lies the secret why these Hebrew documents acquired such an influence over a great portion of the human race. This is the reason why, throughout the whole civilised world, some strain from that book thrills the heart on every solemn occasion; that some tuneful sound from its divine poetry greets the babe in his cradle, and accompanies the worn-out to his grave. There is no great national celebration, no state ceremony, no coronation, without some reminiscence from that book, elevating the hearts of high and low, so that the ancient word, that was applied to the Torah, still holds good as it did of old: "By

me kings reign and princes decree justice. By me princes rule and nobles, even all the judges of the earth."

Thus it is with the influence the Bible has acquired over a portion of civilised mankind at large; it is superfluous to allude to the part played by the Bible among the Jews. But some of you may charge me perhaps with having departed from my subject. It might be urged that I only referred to the Bible as a book of devotion, of religious education and moral training; that I ought instead to have discussed the Bible solely as an item of Jewish literature. It has, indeed, been urged, that we should cease to consider the Bible as a mere text-book of religion, as a hymn-book, but that all attention should be devoted to it solely as a literary production; that we should initiate its readers into the mysteries of critique, into its grammatical structure; that we should weigh the merits of its various components from the point of view of artistic perfection, and compare them with the best productions of other nations. It has been averred that the time had arrived to make that method the principal, if not the exclusive, manner of studying the book.

Now, if these two ways of studying the Bible were two alternatives, the one of which would exclude the other, I, for one, should not be slow in making my choice. If it were a question of either continuing to walk by its light and to be inspired by its teachings, or to relegate it altogether to the literary laboratory for dissection and



analysis, I should say: Let our thirst for literary research go unsatisfied rather than lose the invigorating influences of our Bible. The question reminds me of an anecdote quoted by the late Professor Steinthal, from a book entitled *Canti popolari Toscani, Corsi, Greci raccolti e illustrati da N. Tomasseo*. It is related there that some scholars desired, for purely literary purposes, to make a collection of such popular songs in the Tuscan, the Corsican, and the Greek dialects as still survived in the mouths of peasants in some rural districts of Italy, and which were in danger of falling into oblivion. One of those *literati* asked some peasant girls to sing some of their love-songs to him. The girls looked at him in surprise: they could not believe their own ears. How could they be asked all at once to fall in love with a perfect stranger? These girls were totally ignorant of the existence of such a thing as literature; singing a love-song was to them equivalent to making a declaration of love. They sang them when the spirit of love prompted them; they had no other uses for them. I doubt whether any one could have persuaded those maidens to abandon singing their love-songs, in the sense in which they understood it, for the pleasure and profit of serving the interests of literature.

But there is no need for an illustration fetched from so far; we have an illustration much nearer home, one which concerns the history of our people much more deeply, and



which affects us with a never-dying pathos. We are told that our fathers sat down by the rivers of Babylon and wept when they remembered Zion. Then those who led them captive required songs of them: "Sing us of the songs of Zion," those songs that were part of their very existence, with which their very souls were bound up. [Now they were asked to recite them as mere literary matter, to satisfy the inquisitive interest which their enemies took in them. But they hung up their harps on the willows; they were enraged at the demand coming from such men at such a time, and solemnly determined never to degrade the songs of Zion unto soulless documents of literature.

This would be our choice also if the two aspects of studying the Bible could not be united. But, indeed, perfect harmony prevails between them. The love of our people for their Bible will never die; it will always remain indispensable to our very existence. The less it is considered as an inert mass, as an unprofitable relic of antiquity, the more will it rouse our curiosity to investigate it in all its details, to explore its every nook and corner, to scrutinise its every phase and aspect. The more it is alive, the better will it be fitted to satisfy the purely literary demands; and whatever people may think of vivisection in the ordinary sense of the word, nobody will deny that the analysis of the Bible, when it is alive, and vigorous, and active, is much more profitable to the interests of literature than the inquiries—important though they

doubtlessly are—into the dead and half-buried literatures of some other ancient peoples.

But the Bible by no means exhausts the supply of Jewish literary matter. Besides the Bible there is an enormous literature to be considered. But on closer inspection we shall find that it is the Bible, and nothing but the Bible, that inspires everything which comes under the head of Jewish literature. There is the colossal body of Talmudic and Rabbinical literature. You will not expect me to give, in an address like this, a full description of that which the expression "Talmud" implies. All sorts of strange notions are current about it, even among many members of our own faith. They have some idea that it is a work of many volumes, exceedingly difficult to read—and as to its contents, their conceptions are of the vaguest.

We laugh at the notion of a certain mediaeval monk who imagined that Talmud was the name of a man and quoted "Rabbi Talmud." It is only a degree less erroneous to consider the Talmud as a book. It is not a book; it is a literature. It was not composed by one man, nor at one time; not one scholar, nor even a score of scholars collaborated in its composition. It is not a series of events chronicled by some studious antiquarians. It is not a system of ethical and philosophical reflections penned by some profound thinkers or moralists. It is not a code of civil and criminal law compiled by some scholars versed in the jurisprudence of their people.

It is not a collection of commentaries on the Bible registered by some learned exegetes. It is not a body of popular narratives and poetical outpourings artistically strung together by skilful rhapsodes. It is a totality of all such subjects, and much more besides. All that which agitated the minds of teeming populations of Jews in different countries, and during a number of centuries, mirrors itself in that wonderful record.

It has been repeatedly pointed out that the Talmud is a work that cannot be left out of account by the modern student. It must be reckoned with in the pursuit of a number of disciplines, not necessarily connected with Jewish history and Jewish antiquities. It contains mines of information in the fields of archaeology, and of the religions and usages of several races. The linguist will have to consult it in his researches on the development and kinship of whole groups of languages. The students of ancient geography, chronology, classical philology, numismatics, and several other subjects cannot afford to neglect its pages.

The usefulness of the work in these various directions is, of course, purely accidental; it was never intended to afford facilities of this kind. Nor is this variegated utility its principal claim upon the attention of the modern student; it is not this many-sided interest which makes it unique. It is not its peculiar style, nor its philosophical and ethical maxims, which mark it off from any other literary achievement. Its peculiarity consists in this, that it exhibits a life-like picture of the people

which produced it. It represents faithfully the Jewish race and its history; not its outer history, not its vicissitudes during certain periods of its existence in its contact with other nations. But it is a faithful reflex of the internal history of the Jews, of their beliefs and their abnegations, their hopes and their fears, their intellectual and their psychical endowments. It delineates the Jew in his gloomy and in his merry moods, in his intercourse with others, in his triumphant joy when recollecting the glorious passages of his history, in his unshakeable optimism, which, in the very depth of suffering and degradation, ever prevents him from falling into despair. It describes minutely the godliness that pervades the Jewish life, how his every movement is either the fulfilment or the repudiation of God's will; how that, which with other people is a mere bodily or mental gratification, is with the Jew an act of divine worship, attended by observances which are to lead him up to God, and to make his life one continuous act of divine worship in his pontifical capacity as a member of a kingdom of priests.

It is thus that the Talmudic literature bears a twofold character, which is broadly characterised as Halacha (way of life, laws) and Agada. Whilst the Halachic portion scrutinises the behests by which we are to regulate our actions, the Agadic sections are occupied with that which concerns our internal life, our thoughts and sentiments, our religious instincts, and our moral perceptions. We find there narratives, traditions, allegories, and interpretations of biblical verses, which allow

us to glance into the innermost recesses of the religious and mental conditions of our fathers during the many centuries which are covered by that literature. It is not only in the books of the Talmud, properly so-called, that all this Halachic and Agadic matter is laid down. Not to speak of such prominently Halachic works as the *Tosefta*, the *Sifra*, the *Sifre*, there are the vast Midrashic collections, which form so important an element in Jewish literature.

I shall not trouble you with etymological derivations. It will be enough to mention that the word "Midrash," when it does not denote the title of a book, designates in its narrower sense any saying which takes its issue from some biblical text. In the broader sense of the word we may distinguish in the Midrashic works various methods. One of them is that to which I have already alluded, by which a doctrine or maxim is inferred by means of the interpretation of a text. Another method is to prefer the subject in the name of one or another sage, quite independent of any biblical passages. A third method is to introduce the subject in the form of a question, of an inquiry, and is then called, "Yelamdenu," from the introductory formula, "Yelamdenu Rabbenu," "Please, Master, tell us."

The late Professor Steinthal, in his *Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft bei den Griechen und Römern*, expresses some difficulty in reconciling the etymology of the (word Midrash,) which, he thinks, should denote "subtle discussion," with the light and easy argumentation with which we meet in Midrash. He is of



opinion that the word Midrash is only a translation of the Greek term *ζήτημα*, "question," "inquiry." He refers to the *ζητήματα* of the Alexandrian scholars of the second and third Christian centuries. They were questions on various subjects propounded by scholars when dining or taking a walk, and to which answers, or rather solutions (*λύσεις*), were given on the spot. The questions turned on inept trivialities; for instance, Why are there twenty-four letters? And the answer was, that the twenty-four letters accorded with the twenty-four hours of the day and night; that the vowels represented the day, and the consonants the night. Or also, that the vowels represented the soul and the consonants the body. Steinthal thinks that his conjecture is confirmed by the formula "in accordance with," *κατὰ μέμησιν*, which, he thinks, is the original of the formula *בננו*, which occurs frequently in Midrashic exposition. I mention this only in order to point out that, if there is any similarity of method between the *quasi*-learned *ζητήματα* of the Alexandrians and the Midrash, it can only be with those sections which are introduced by the formula "Yelamdenu." It is, however, idle to speculate on it; both the word Midrash and the conception is much older than these *ζητήματα*. For the rest Steinthal is correct when he says, "That the essential difference between the two consists in this, that, whilst the *ζητήματα* of the Greeks were earnest plays or playful earnestness, the Midrash deposited in the form offered the most profound religious feeling."



This Talmudic and Midrashic literature exercised the minds of Jewish scholars for a very long time, and it has become one of the principal subjects of research among modern Jewish men of letters. The interest attached to that literature is of the same double character as that connected with the Bible; there is, if I may say so, the practical and the literary interest, which, so far from clashing, supplement each other. The Talmudist as such and the Talmudic critic are not two distinct classes of scholars. Here also the same impatience has been given voice to as in the case of the Bible, and there are people who think that the Talmud should be studied on exclusively literary grounds; that the study of these books for the purpose of practical application is out of date, and is, as a matter of fact, decreasing day by day. It is not so long ago that I heard a well-known Anglo-Jewish man of letters hold forth about the mistaken zeal of some old-fashioned Rabbis, who were still bending their backs over those "musty, dusty, moth-eaten folios." In respect to the decay of the study of the Talmud I can only mention that there were never so many editions of the Talmud printed as in recent times. Not less than twenty-five editions of the whole of the Babylonian Talmud have been printed within the last hundred years; which makes an average of one edition to every four years. The dustiness and mustiness and moth-eaten condition of the volumes is altogether a matter of fancy; long before one edition becomes moth-eaten a new edition is prepared.

The merit of coping with dust and mustiness for the sake of literary research is great indeed, I do not deny it; but it is not the merit of the Talmudist with his beautifully printed and well-bound books. The greatest credit in this direction is rather due to those *litterati* who try to unearth manuscripts of long-forgotten works; as, for instance, those who burrow up old Genizas, where literary treasures of rare value lie buried under mountains of dust; where half-decayed parchments have to be dug out, which can only be deciphered with the greatest difficulty. But why dwell on all this? It is with the Talmud as it is with the Bible. Books, like nations, have their history, which shapes itself according to natural laws, and natural laws cannot be forced by individual sympathies or antipathies.

At the present moment, the study of Talmudic and Midrashic literature occupies a large number of scholars in the Old and in the New World; not only among Jews, but also among Christians. If I were to give a catalogue of all the books, essays, pamphlets, which were written on subjects connected with the Talmud during the last ten years only, that most dreary task would far outrun the limit of time allotted to a lecture. But it is not only in recent times that Christian scholars turned their attention to the Talmud. Ever since Johann Reuchlin opened to Christian Europe the portals of Hebrew and Rabbinical lore, the Talmud has been included in the curriculum of Orientalists and theologians. At Reuchlin's time such books were exceedingly scarce. In

this respect also does the history of the Talmud bear a striking resemblance to the history of the Jews. Religious fanaticism and race-hatred vented their malice on the Jews and on their books alike. Jews, sometimes whole congregations of Jews, were publicly burned; so were waggon-loads of copies of the Talmud and other Jewish books. The latter circumstance seriously interfered with the supply of copies. Reuchlin, in spite of his strenuous efforts to obtain a copy of the Talmud, seems to have possessed no more than the one treatise of Sanhedrin. But soon the printing-presses set to work; one edition followed the other at short intervals. The renascence of letters, the spread of Humanism, and the Reformation of the Christian Church combined to draw the attention of Christian theologians to this new branch of study. Pico of Mirandula, Egidio of Viterbo, Sebastian Münster, Paul Fagius, and many more, were the pioneers, and a number of zealous workers followed in their footsteps. The *Itinerary* of Benjamin of Tudela was translated in 1648 by Constantin l'Empereur. Edward Pococke not only wrote commentaries to the prophets, but translated also, in his *Porta Mosis*, Maimonides' introduction and part of his commentaries to the Mishna. John Lightfoot gave the Christian public important information about Rabbinic literature in his *Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae*; and in 1698 a translation of the whole of the Mishna by Willem Surenhuys appeared in Amsterdam. Unfortunately, such zeal on the part of the Christians did not always spring

from learned and theological motives; it was sometimes due to the desire of picking holes in the works of the Jews and exhibiting them in the worst possible light. Johann Christoph Wagenseil, who professed to be a great friend of the Jews, devoted a considerable portion of his life to the attempt of vindicating to his friends the Jews an alleged virulent hatred of the Christians. For this purpose he ransacked the whole field of Jewish literature, and issued the results of his labours in two volumes, entitled *The Fiery Darts of Satan*, which to the impartial eye by no means prove his propositions. The most notorious of this class of writers was Johann Andreas Eisenmenger, who in his work, *Entdecktes Judenthum* ("Judaism Exposed") was at pains to exhibit, in an unscrupulous and dishonest manner, the Jews as a thoroughly corrupt race, and a danger to Christians. He professed to do this in the interests of his fellow-Christians, although he offered to destroy his book for a consideration of 30,000 dollars.

The aforementioned authors were only some of the pioneers. A number of scholars of greater or lesser eminence followed, and we gain an idea of the lengths to which these studies were carried on by Christians from the fact that the work of Blasio Ugolino, entitled *Thesaurus Antiquitatum Sacrarum Hebraicarum*, which contains some Rabbinical works with their translations, and a number of essays, consists of no less than thirty-four folio volumes of enormous size.

At the present time, the new school both of Jewish and

Christian scholars pursues, of course, that kind of study after modern historical and critical methods. Men of great acumen and learning are busy investigating these literary treasures; although it must be confessed that among some of them the spirit of Wagenseil and Eisenmenger has not quite died out.

But Bible and Talmud are not the only elements of Jewish literature. There are other manifestations of Jewish thought and sentiment, each of which forms an entire literature of its own, which again branches off into several sideways and bypaths. There is, for instance, the Jewish Hellenistic literature. If I were allowed to apply to literature the terminology used in natural history, I might perhaps call the Jewish-Hellenistic literature a sub-kingdom, or, at least, a well-defined class, with its orders, families, genera, and species. It may be said to cover a period of three centuries. It would be venturesome for me to attempt to give in a few words the general characteristics of so vast and variegated a literature. About a few of these productions it is still a point of controversy whether they were originally composed in Greek, in Hebrew, or in Syriac. We have here the difficult questions about the origin and character of the Septuagint as it was composed in the first instance, and the Greek translation of the Bible which we possess under that name. The study of the Apocryphal books of the Bible forms a realm of its own. The Jewish Hellenistic writings comprise imitations of the books of the Biblical canon; history,



either pure, or as an admixture of facts and fancies; philosophy, or, rather, theosophy; poetry, and a large amount of pseudo-epigraphical compositions. Both the history and the theosophy display harmonisation and blending of heterogeneous elements. The fresh fragrance of indigenous originality is wanting. They are for the most part exotic plants, which derive their verdure and flowering from artificial fructification. Considered from this point of view, we cannot but admire some of its productions as noble manifestations of the direction the Jewish mind had taken in spite of the untoward condition of the times. The highest ethical perceptions find expression in some of these works; and it is after all the Bible, the Land, the Temple, that animated their authors. The foreign elements are overshadowed by the Jewish spirit which claims its own everywhere. These Egyptian productions breathe intense patriotism towards the land of Israel, and warm loyalty to its institutions. The Egyptian Jews continued sending donations and sacrifices to Jerusalem. They separated the second tithe even in the year of release for the purpose of affording relief to their poorer brethren in Judaea, who, during that year, were debarred from attending to their agricultural pursuits. We read in Philo that the Jews of Alexandria contributed from their first-fruits to Jerusalem, together with large sums of money, by messengers "who travelled over rugged, difficult, and almost impassable roads, which they looked upon as level and easy inasmuch as they



served to lead them to piety." The Jewish Hellenistic authors were never tired of extolling the importance and sacredness of the sanctuary in Jerusalem. The older Philo wrote a poem in glorification of our ancient city, of which, unfortunately, as good as nothing is left. The other Philo, the philosopher, lauds Jerusalem and its temple to the skies. He says that "The Jews, in whatever country they might live, considered the city, in which the temple of the Most High God stood, as their metropolis." He speaks "of the most beautiful and famous temple, which is respected by all the East and the West, and is regarded like the sun which shines everywhere," and he declares that all calamities befalling the Jews were of minor importance as compared with outrages committed against the temple.

The authors of the Jewish portions of the third book and of the fifth book of the Sibylline Oracles describe the greatness of Jerusalem and its temple in glowing terms. These oracles belong to the pseudo-epigraphic portion of Hellenistic literature.] I have dwelt on another occasion on the appearance of spurious books of that class, the manufacture of which was quite a common occupation at that time.<sup>1</sup> Whatever we may think of the justification or otherwise of such, either Jewish, or Christian, or heathen *falsarii*, the fact remains, that this pseudo-epigraphical literature is of great importance in the history of letters, and these works

<sup>1</sup> See page 254 *sqq.*

justly enjoy the close attention of students of that class of learning.

Time does not allow me to say more than a word or two about two other sub-kingdoms of Jewish literature. There is the Arabic-Spanish literature of the Jews, so rich in philosophers, exegetes, grammarians, Talmudists, and poets. As to the philosophers, great as some of them were, with very few exceptions they do no more than attempt a harmonisation of Greek philosophy with Jewish lore and Jewish practices. *Mutatis mutandis*, they applied the same methods as the mediaeval Moslem and Christian philosophers.<sup>1</sup> The latter were occasionally influenced by their Jewish predecessors. Did not, for instance, Duns Scotus make use of Gabirol's *Fons Vitae*, the author of which he only knew under the name of Avicbron, without knowing that the master at whose feet he sat was a Jew?

One meets with much more originality in modern Jewish poetry, both of the early Spanish and of the later schools. Much as their poetical inspirations conform to foreign modes, these modes were made to conform to an infinitely greater extent to their own religious and national ideals. Gabirol and R. Jehuda Halevi modelled the outer form of their poems after the Arabic pattern, but they made the pattern the handmaid and not the mistress of the spirit that animated them. Alcharizi imitated the style of the Arabic

<sup>1</sup> See page 173 *sqq.*

versifier, Hariri, but then he strikes out a line for himself ; and—to use Heinrich Heine's phrase—this man who was a follower of Voltaire several centuries before Voltaire was born, *überwältigt* (outjokes) his master Hariri. It is true that whole passages in Moses Luzatto's play, *Migdal Oz*, are imitations of Guarini's *Pastor Fido*, but the breath of Jewish feeling pervades that most marvellous, however artificial composition.

What can I do more now than merely allude to that wonderful liturgical literature of ours, our Piyutim, our propitiatory prayers, our dirges, great numbers of which were composed in every country where Jews lived and suffered? They again breathe, one and all, those sentiments of true religiousness, of trust in God among dire sufferings. Supreme in them reigns that optimism which never despairs of Israel's rehabilitation.

I can only name the mystic literature of the Jews ; a subject which requires careful handling. We have the French school of Talmudists and exegetes, which succeeded in establishing for a long time its supremacy in North and West Europe. I must omit our Massoretic and grammatical literature. Then, there is that most interesting Yiddish literature upon which so many look down, but which is of sufficient importance to deserve the attention of students of Jewish life. There are many more classes and genera which would fall within our plan, were it possible for me to execute it

as it deserves. I have only been able to dwell at some length on some of the earliest phases of our literature; want of time precludes me from discussing their subsequent stages.

We have the modern historical and critical Jewish literature, the origin and birth of which is most conveniently connected with the name of Moses Mendelssohn. What enormous strides has not that literature made since Leopold Zunz commenced to give it a new direction!

I shall stop now, at the threshold of this sub-kingdom of our Jewish literature. I shall not minimise its importance by the quotation of two or three instances to the exclusion of all others. It is in that literature that your society wishes to form a link. Your members are fully alive to the vastness of the field; you are aware that you may be contented if your efforts succeed in adding only a few grains to the store. Your wishes are sincere; and as for success, we must be mindful of the Rabbinical saying:

לא עליך המלאכה לגמור ולא אתה בן חורין  
להפטר ממנו,

"The circumstance that the completion of the work is out of your reach does not give you the right to abstain from assisting in it."



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